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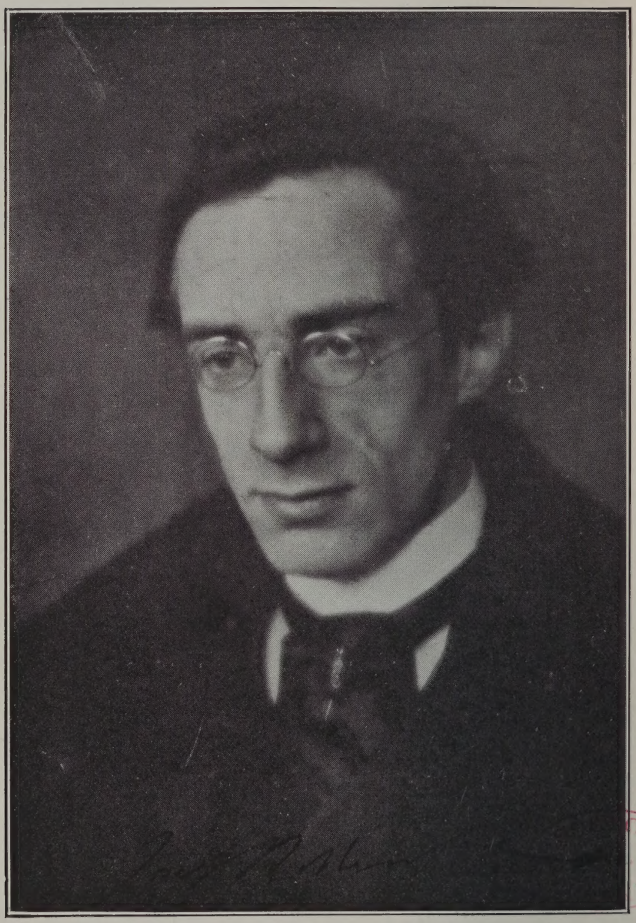
# JOSEF HOLBROOKE AND HIS WORK



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# JOSEF HOLBROOKE
## AND HIS WORK

BY

GEORGE LOWE

WITH MUSICAL BLOCKS IN TEXT AND PORTRAIT FRONTISPIECE OF JOSEF HOLBROOKE

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# CONTENTS


| CHAPTER | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| | INTRODUCTION | vii |
| I | THE MAN AND HIS MUSIC | 1 |
| II | THE CRITIC AND HIS WORK | 40 |
| III | EARLY COMPOSITIONS FOR VIOLIN, CLARINET, MANDOLINE, VIOLONCELLO WITH PIANOFORTE | 63 |
| IV | VOCAL WORKS | 70 |
| V | PIANOFORTE AND ORGAN WORKS | 84 |
| VI | CHAMBER WORKS | 90 |
| VII | ORCHESTRAL POEMS | 123 |
| VIII | SYMPHONIES | 171 |
| IX | MISCELLANEOUS ORCHESTRAL WORKS | 207 |
| X | OPERAS | 234 |
| XI | OTHER WORKS | 277 |
| | LIST OF COMPOSITIONS | 301 |

## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

I WISH, here, to record my thanks to Novello & Co., Chester & Co., Leonard & Co., Hammond & Co., Boosey & Co., Ascherberg & Co., Augener & Co., Weekes & Co., J. H. Larway, Enoch & Co., Ricordi & Co., Cary & Co., Lengnick & Co., Cramer & Co., Stainer & Bell, Rudall Carte, and Trinity College, for supplying me with complimentary copies of some of Holbrooke's smaller works, whilst my acknowledgments are also due to Novello & Co., Chester & Co., Boosey & Co., Weekes & Co., J. H. Larway and the Composer for the loan of the orchestral scores necessary for the compilation of this volume, and to Mr. Holbrooke himself for kindly allowing me to see his manuscript works.

GEORGE LOWE

# INTRODUCTION

THE annals of English history show little to the credit of native musical composers before the latter half of the Victorian era was reached. Previous to this, the names of Purcell and of a few Elizabethan madrigalists, such as William Byrd, Thomas Morley, John Wilbye, Thomas Weelkes, and a few others, had stood out like gleams of light in Cimmerian darkness. Otherwise, for real, solid, monumental work—where shall we look for it?

England, indeed, in the past, has not done for music what might have been expected of her. Many of her sons have been endowed with rich imaginative gifts, but these gifts have been directed into other channels than that of music. Poetry has had her Shakespeare, her Marlowe and her Milton, but the genius of the golden age of English literature found no adequate analogy in English music. In Germany, on the other hand, music was quick to reflect the romantic spirit of her great writers, Goethe and Schiller, whilst the mental activities of her great scientists also had their influence on the art. The mathematical laws of Kepler, as applied to the planetary system, found their counterpart in the works of Bach, nearly all

of whose music is ruled by the mathematical ideas that dominate fugal writing; the philosophy of Kant found its counterpart, to a great extent, in the music of Beethoven, in which we feel very potently the soaring of the soul above the more material instincts, and a deeply-reflective probing into the mysteries of the universe.

The profundity and philosophy of German thought and the romantic movement in German and English poetry have only, of recent years, begun to exert an influence on English music. Our own philosophic and scientific writers, Bacon, Harvey and Newton, had no effect in their day, and though the earlier part of the Elizabethan age (so rich in romantic spirit and in great adventure) was followed by an era in which the great imaginative gifts of Shakespeare and Spencer reigned supreme, yet no trace of their vein of opulent thought is discoverable in the English music that followed till the advent of Purcell.

When, under the Stuarts, England became embroiled in all the horrors of civil war, art of all kinds sank to its lowest ebb. From this, the art of music never recovered until the latter half of last century, when, at last, we began to make up for lost years.

English music has never received much encouragement from the nation at large. It was so in the past, and it remains the same to-day. The greatest aid came formerly from the Catholic Church. Religion, in fact, has always been one of the chief incentives to most of the great achieve-

ments of all forms of art. To Grecian mythology we owe some of the finest examples of sculpture, whilst to Catholicism we owe many of the great masterpieces of music and painting.

With the Reformation in England, came the cessation, generally, of the encouragement of the arts. The services of the reformed church do not offer that medium for musical inspiration that the offices of the Catholic Church do. In Italy, the choir of the Sistine Chapel kept alive the great works of the Italian composers and encouraged their aims; in England, the Reformed Church quenched them. Paintings were abolished from the walls of her places of worship, and the plastic arts suffered in a similar manner.

Music, in particular, played a very unimportant part in the two centuries that followed the Reformation age. Addison, writing in one of the numbers of the *Spectator* as late as 1711, said, "At present, our notions of music are so very uncertain that we do not know what it is that we like, only in general we are transported with anything that is not English."

Thus, even in the early part of the eighteenth century, we were opening our gates to the foreigner to the large exclusion of English writers, just as we are doing to-day. In that age, there was a good deal of excuse for such an action; in the present, however, there is none. The music of the Queen Anne period and onward to the mid-Victorian period was trivial in the extreme. For this, the laxity of morals and the coarseness of ideas of the Anne and

Georgian eras were largely responsible. Lofty ideals could not have found much of an appeal in such an age. The licentious courts of three, at least, of the four Georges offered an excuse for the rest of the nation to follow their lead, and a general period of artistic stagnation resulted. Literature certainly claimed a few bright particular geniuses of rich humour and psychological insight, but their works were so full of *ordure* and obscene suggestions that they disgust our more modern susceptibilities. Yet, the plays of Wycherley and Congreve, the novels of Richardson, Fielding, Smollett and Sterne, and the pictures of Hogarth, are full of great qualities, and define life as those men saw it and often as they lived it. It was not likely, however, that the art of music should reach a very high level, fostered in such surroundings.

The two writers who did the most to refine the manners of the age were Sir Walter Scott and Jane Austen. The one, in his works, taught the lesson of chivalry and of gentlemanly manhood, whilst the other taught the significance of home and of the homely virtues. It took some time, however, for the nation to be liberated from the slough into which it had fallen, but before Queen Victoria had been long upon the throne, signs of improvement in general ideas and modes of life became evident. The Court was no longer a pernicious influence upon the nation, and the Queen was a woman of culture, who did what she could to encourage artistic ambitions.

The possibilities of musical development became

of importance now that it could be procreated in a new environment of greater refinement, of less carelessness and of greater subtlety of thought, and soon there was a slight stirring of the musical pulse. Yet, only a very feeble life was perceptible at first. The early Victorian music was of the most banal type. The mind of the nation had not then quite recovered from the general atrophy from which it had suffered. The attention of the chief musicians of the time was principally turned towards opera, the most popular composers of which were Balfe, Wallace, Macfarren, and Benedict. Before this time, the only operatic writer of any note had been Henry Purcell. Certain writers of light songs, such as "Claribel," "Dolores," and Stephen Glover were also very popular in their day, but their work was of a terribly uninspired and arid nature. Yet a few productions of this period still continue to retain a hold upon the affections of the less musical public even now, and among these are the operas, "*The Bohemian Girl*," "*Maritana*," "*The Lily of Killarney*," and a few others. Such works can never be accounted good art, but they contain many melodies of a cheap, artificial type, and a fund of exaggerated sentiment that has always had a strong appeal to the tastes of that strange being—the great British public. The majority of the examples of early Victorian art, however, have been relegated to oblivion long ago. Like the plesiosaurus and ichthyosaurus, they have become extinct types. They have given way to the law of "the survival of the fittest," and our know-

ledge of the insipidities of "the fittest" should help us to gauge how feeble and jejune the remainder of the music of that age was. A celebrated wit once said that "language was given us to conceal our thoughts," and it is to be hoped that the early Victorian music was of this nature—or the thoughts of the writers of it must have been pretty dull.

Gradually, however, English composers began to recognise that mere tune-stringing to tickle the idle ears of their audiences was not the chief mission of music; it should have a far higher import than this, and should be based upon intensity of feeling; it should also be something quite personal to the composer. Germany had revealed her poetic "soul" in music. Why should England prove so reticent?

At all events, English composers began to grow more ambitious and to stretch their wings a little. High ideals were no longer matters for jest. New sources were recognised as suitable for musical inspiration, and as merely awaiting the light of genius to reveal the many suggestions that they comprehended. So we meet with such composers as Mackenzie, Barnby, Macfarren, Parry, Cowen and Stanford—men who have done much to raise the tone of English music, but whose work possesses no very great abiding quality. It belongs to the placid, pleasant British type of music—which often possesses much melodic charm and is technically clever, but none of which sounds a true individual note. It follows in the rut that other

composers have made. It is timid and hesitant, and fears to speak in original accents lest it should be accounted bizarre and exaggerated. It is prim and has a sort of Uriah Heep " 'umbleness " about it. In its intense conservatism lies its chief weakness. It still clings for protection to the outworn formulas of a past age, and watches the encroaching sea of new ideas creeping around with horrified trepidation. Some day it is bound to sink, for this " stay-at-home," imitative form of art never has a very long life, though it may possibly outlast its generation by a few years. The great composers, however, were always *explorers* in art—Beethoven, Schumann, Wagner, Scriabin, and Debussy. They had individualities to express in music, and they could not always do it in the conventional pattern that other men had designed.

Nevertheless, we owe a good deal of gratitude to these English composers of the conservative school. They have gone to work in an earnest manner, and have done much to pick English music out of the refuse heap into which it had fallen. Their work, at least, suggested that England might, though rather late in the day, become the leading centre of creative musical work. How far that suggestion has been verified, each one can judge for himself. At all events, the work of these conservative composers led the way to the far greater and more comprehensive art that was to come later.

Individual though this new art is, however, it would doubtless have taken a very different form had it not been for the enormous influence exercised

by that wonderful genius, Richard Wagner. Wagner, indeed, effected the greatest revolution ever experienced in music. His ideas have crept both consciously and unconsciously into many different forms of art. There were doubtless some faults in his system, but the main principles must ever form part of the music of the future.

We are heirs of time, moreover, and benefit by everything good that has preceded us. Art does not stand still, though it may be quiescent for a time. It then accepts what it inherits and *adds* to it. The man of strong individuality who takes the fullest advantage of the most valuable of the heritages of the past, and, at the same time, moulds them to accord with his own originality, is a man of genius from whom much may be expected. We have three such musicians of genius in England to-day in Elgar, Holbrooke, and Bantock. Indeed, one would not be asserting too much in saying that few such remarkable imaginative musical minds can be found throughout the breadth of Europe. That all three of them owe much to the genius of Wagner, it would be futile to deny, but the great fact remains that they have all *added* to what they have inherited. Moreover, they have all added to it in different directions. The music of each strikes an individual note, and is the revelation of a particular personality. Neither composer has hesitated to express himself without reserve. Past conventions have had to go to the dogs where they have hampered the composer in conveying his meaning. Holbrooke, in particular, has been much censored

for the many licenses that he has taken. Yet the traditions of the past have been constantly followed by him where he has felt them to be fitted to the purpose that he has had in view, and they have never been passed over out of mere wanton scorn. But he has had no hesitation in utilising new harmonic combinations and progressions, nor in employing unusual and debatable instruments in his orchestral scores where he has considered them applicable to the situation visualised by him. How far art has benefited by this modern freedom of thought must be a vexed subject for many years to come. Modern ears have not yet become acclimatised to the new tonal combinations, and critics and musicians generally are, at present, somewhat divided in their ideas concerning it.

Meanwhile, the *Zeitgeist* passes over us without letting us perceive whether it sympathises or laughs at the music that our present-day state of living is generating; nor does it reveal whether it is towards Cosmos or Chaos that it is tending. Somewhere, however, beside a distant sea, three women, busy with distaff, thread and scissors, thread the web of Fate! and each of these, too, is dumb!

# JOSEF HOLBROOKE

## CHAPTER I

### THE MAN AND HIS MUSIC

JOSEF HOLBROOKE was one of six children, and was born at Croydon in 1878. A brother and two sisters having died in childhood, only Josef and two sisters are left surviving.

For generations back, the Holbrooke family has been a musical family, whilst Josef can also boast of a grandfather who distinguished himself both as an artist and as a musician. His father was a fine pianist, and the composer of a few works of a trifling nature. His mother was a Scotchwoman and a professional vocalist, and to her the composer owes the Celtic strain in his music and character. This strain is evidenced in much of his piano work, in some of his songs, such as *Annabel Lee* for instance, in the "*In Memoriam*" *Sextet*, in *Apollo and the Seaman*, in *Dylan*, and in many other compositions.

Josef's early years were spent in travelling, for his father toured with various entertainers and visited a large number of the towns of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales. His mother, who had always been delicate in constitution, found the strain of constant travel a severe tax upon her feeble strength. The result was that, in 1880, she succumbed to the malady of phthisis, from which she had long suffered, leaving Josef and his two sisters to the care of their father.

Soon after this, the elder Holbrooke obtained an engagement as pianist at Collins' Music Hall, Islington, and, later, at the Bedford Music Hall, and he and his family settled down in London. Whilst here, the young Josef became a chorister at St. Anne's Church, and also attended the St. Anne's Schools there. He had inherited a treble voice of big range from his mother, and could reach the top C with ease. Often he would accompany his father to the music hall, and also play there!

All his early musical education came from his father, who taught him both the violin and piano. The latter was always his favourite instrument, however. Luckily, the tastes of the elder Holbrooke rose above those of the music hall at which he was employed, and he educated his son in the works of the great classical masters. But Josef was always avid to learn more, and all his odd shillings went towards the purchase of such works as the Concertos of Beethoven and the Sonatas of Clementi. A favourite thing with him at this time was the "Cujus Animam" from Rossini's *Stabat*

*Mater,* whilst he also greatly admired Spohr's *Last Judgment.*

There can be no doubt that the time that he spent at the Music Halls was not wasted. Though the orchestras at these places were small, rarely consisting of more than a few violins, viola, violoncello, controbass, flute, clarinet, cornet, trombone and drums, still he was able to judge what effects certain instruments were capable of producing, and this did him yeoman service later.

The youth developed rapidly, and soon became most proficient in pianoforte and violin playing—so much so, in fact, that his father found he had nothing more to teach him and decided to take him up and enter him as a student at the Royal Academy of Music. It was his ambition that his son should be trained as a conductor, but this idea was laughed at by the professors of the Academy to whom it was mooted! It would be time enough to think about that, they said, when the lad should have gone through a thorough course of academic training.

Behold then young Holbrooke, already a first-class pianist and musician, installed as a student at the Academy in 1893, at the age of fifteen! Here he was able to extend his knowledge of the classics for which he had long yearned, and he now worked with painstaking diligence at Clementi, Chopin, Beethoven, Liszt and Schumann, in turn. There could be no doubt, however, that, in spite of his fine gifts as an executant, his true bent lay in the direction of composition. Musical ideas were

always with him. Indeed, he had more than he knew what to do with. He professes to have been able to write music at any time without waiting for a so-called "inspiration" to descend upon him, and this remarkable musical fecundity has been with him throughout his whole career.

Untiring energy, too, has generally been a leading key-note of his character, and he possessed a fair mead of it even during his student days. He worked hard at creative work, and before long his compositions began to be performed at the fortnightly concerts of the Academy. Though only friends were admitted to these concerts, the audience was always a musical and often a very critical one. The programmes were arranged by Mr. Frederick Corder, and not by the principal, Sir A. Mackenzie. The first work of Holbrooke's given at these functions was a pianoforte trio in G minor in three movements, performed by himself as pianist, Miss E. Byford as violinist, and Miss May Mukle as 'cellist, in 1895. This work still remains in manuscript. Another chamber work of large dimensions that obtained a hearing at these concerts was a Pianoforte Quartet in G minor, given by Miss Gertrude Peppercorn (piano), Miss E. Byford (violin), Mr. Vernon Addison (viola), and Mr. Herbert Withers ('cello). The 'cello part in this work was particularly difficult.

The group of piano pieces, *Valse Romanesque, By the Sea* (*Nocturne*) and *L'orgie* (*Fantasie Bacchanale*), the last three numbers of the *Second Suite,* now published as part of Op. 18, was also

written and performed whilst he was a student at the Academy. These little pieces, like the larger works of the composer, showed considerable leanings towards harmonic freedom and too much unconventionality of design to meet with the approval of the principal of the conservative Tenterden Street Institution. Holbrooke chafed greatly under the attempts to frustrate his individuality from having free outlet in his music, and, being somewhat of a revolutionist, condemned the general routine of the Academy, root and branch. He was particularly irritated by the fact that when he had to play any of his own works at the private concerts, these were almost invariably placed at the end of the programme. Such was the case with the programme announcing the performance of the three piano works already mentioned. He determined on this occasion, however, to play a trick upon those in authority. He was down to give a rendering of Schumann's "*Toccata*" early in the concert, but what was the surprise and shock of his listeners to hear him boldly plunge straight away into his own compositions instead! After this, he disappeared, so that the Schumann "*Toccata*" went unperformed! However, the next morning he had to face the "music," for he was called before Principal Mackenzie and others of the professors and then had to hear much from them concerning his "morbid music," his "horrible harmonies," his "lack of melody," and his "objectionable style." Such bigotry on the part of the Academy professors appears laughable now,

but it must have rankled in the mind of the sensitive young composer at the time!

After this, his life at the Academy was largely one of discontent at being held in the leash of its conventional routine. He longed for more expansive modes of expression, but could find no sympathy or encouragement for his experiments. His originality at this time made him feel very much alone. But he never abated his labours, for Holbrooke always had the courage of his convictions, and he always had the fighting instinct to struggle to maintain them in the face of the most bitter opposition and obloquy. Among other works written at the Academy and performed at its private concerts was a *Sextet for piano and five strings* in the form of dances—*Plantation, Slavonic, Landler* and *Tarantelle*. His Professors did not like the *Slavonic,* and so Holbrooke wrote the *Tarantelle* in two days as it stands. This *Sextet* figures as Op. 20 in Ricordi's list. Other works of this date were another Sextet for strings, a "*Serenade*" *for* 4 *violins,* the "*Legende*" and "*Ballade*" *for violin and piano* (Op. 5), and these, with the previously mentioned quartet, all obtained a public hearing at St. James's Hall. Another work, written at the Academy, which the composer considers one of his best works as a student, was a *Concerto* in one movement for piano and orchestra, but this was never publicly performed, being condemned at the private rehearsal by the Principal!

Owing to home troubles, Holbrooke was com-

pelled to leave the Academy in 1896, after a broken course there of about three years. He left it with many honours, however. For pianoforte playing he had won the bronze and silver medals, the Heathcote Long prize and the Potter Exhibition. This latter he had had to forfeit on gaining the Sterndale Bennett Scholarship for all round musicianship, which he won with the *G minor piano Quartet* that has been already spoken of. It was on the advice of his master and friend, Mr. Frederick Westlake, that he had entered for this scholarship. He had also borne away the Lucas Medal prize with his *Pantomime Suite* for string orchestra, the pianoforte arrangement of which appears among his works as Op. 36 (b); yet, in spite of these achievements, he had often failed for an "Elements" examination! Such are the anomalies of our musical system!

The time had now come when it was necessary for Holbrooke to seek out a career for himself. He was nearly eighteen years of age, and a remarkably well-developed musician for his years. He took the first thing that offered itself. An advertisement in the "Era" for a pianist and conductor for a Scotch tour attracted his attention, and soon he is to be found travelling around the country playing a few solos and accompanying comic songs. A strange occupation for a musician of his ability and ideals, indeed! But life offers queer contrasts in its time, and between the mind condemned to drudgery of this nature and the mind that could conceive magnificent music-dramas such as *The*

*Children of Don* and *Dylan,* what a seeming gap there lies! But is it not, after all, the man who has lived through the greatest hardships who generally has the most serious perception of things? The lessons of life are not often learnt along primrose ways.

Holbrooke's first start in life was fated to end disastrously. At some places, such as Inverness, Strathpeffer, and Elgin, he and his company were fairly well supported, but at others, such as Keith, Macduff, Buckie, and Lossiemouth, no one attended the place where they were playing at all. As a result, after six weeks, the tour came to an abrupt end, and the young musician was forced to return to his father, minus a few weeks' salary, and by the sea route, into the bargain!

From this tour he brought back a very poor opinion of the musical temperament of the Scotch as a nation, which caused him some surprise, for, as he has said, their lovely folk-lore, their weird and wonderful scenery and their poetical country, would lead one to expect great things of them. Instead, he was doomed to disappointment.

He did not remain with his father very long, for soon we find him settled in Harringay, and taking pupils. These, however, were very few in number and brought in a very poor remuneration, and after six months of this penurious sort of life he again found it necessary to obtain some regular occupation, and, seeing an advertisement in the "*Musical News*" for a musical companion, he answered it, and thereby met one of the

best friends of his life in the Rev. E. S. Bengough, who was to help him a great deal in after years. Later, he resorted to the pages of "*The Era*" in search of employment. Through the medium of this paper, he accepted the offer of conductorship of a "fit-up" theatrical company that was opening with *Aladdin and the Lamp*, Christmas, 1899. A week's rehearsal had to be given free, and this proved a severe drain upon his slender resources. The orchestra, on the first night, consisted of a cornet, violin and piano only, Holbrooke being the pianist! At later performances, he would often play the violin and a third-rate pianist would be obtained, from the town where they were performing, in his stead.

At this time, Holbrooke was a teetotaller, and he had to put up with many jibes from his fellow-travellers on account of his abstinence. He suffered many indignities, too, that were very galling to his sensitive nature. Unlike most of his companions, he did not borrow any of his salary in advance at the conclusion of the week's rehearsal, and he had much cause to regret this later. After a fortnight's tour, the manager decamped, leaving his whole company stranded at Worksop practically penniless. Fortunately, he left the fittings behind him, so that the company decided to give a performance on their own account. It was at this time that the Rev. E. S. Bengough came forward to help his young friend out of his sorry plight by assisting him to return to London.

An old proverb tells, however, that every cloud

has a silver lining, and during this disastrous tour Holbrooke received the first real chance of his lifetime. He had submitted the MS. of his first orchestral poem, *The Raven,* to Sir Augustus Manns (then Mr. Augustus Manns), the Crystal Palace conductor, a musician noted for practical encouragement to native composers with high aims, and had received a reply from him to the effect that he would be glad if Holbrooke would go and play it over to him.

Imagine the joy of the ardent young composer when this communication reached him! On his return to London, he lost no time in calling on Manns. He was full of confidence in himself, for, in spite of much discouragement, Holbrooke has never minimised the position that he holds among creative musicians. At this meeting all went well. Manns was pleased with the work, and the interview ended with the decision of the conductor to give it at one of his famous Saturday Afternoon Concerts.

The rehearsals lasted a week, which is much longer than orchestral compositions get nowadays. Holbrooke attended all of these, and learnt much in the process. The work, of course, was largely experimental, for the composer had had little experience then of writing for a big orchestra. Many passages in it were found to be impossible for some of the instruments, whilst others were of extreme difficulty, and, at the request of Manns, these were altered by the composer.

The performance of "*The Raven*" took place

on March 3rd, 1900, and had a very favourable reception. Holbrooke has been a marked man from that date. The composer, though proud of his success, was one of the first to note the weakness of certain parts of his work, for his mind is particularly analytical. Though the shafts of his critical faculty have at times been directed against the music of his contemporaries, he has been equally critical of his own, and if he has upheld the claims of those among his own works that satisfied him, he has also often been very generous in his estimate of those of others. He was quick to seize upon the many incompetent and ineffective passages that he had written, and also to observe where the work would benefit by amplification, and when he received the MS. back from Manns, there was hardly a bar of it that he did not alter. The score that now exists is entirely a new one. The old one is in the possession of Mr. Ernest Newman. After all, as Shakespeare says, "the best men are moulded out of faults," and experience has always proved the best master.

Emboldened by the success attending his first orchestral poem, Holbrooke now began to make strenuous efforts to get some of his earlier and smaller pieces on the market. Many of these were accepted by various publishers, but did not prove very remunerative to the writer of them. The little piano piece "*Mignon*" was sold for the princely sum of one guinea. The firm of Leonard and Co. took many of Holbrooke's early piano pieces at low prices! Mr. Leonard once likened himself and

Holbrooke to "philanthropists" both working for posterity, neither of them to get any return in their lifetime, but I do not think that his firm has done so badly out of Holbrooke's compositions, after all!

Meantime, the composer was proceeding with his more serious work, and had been busily occupied with his second poem, first entitled "*The Skeleton in Armour,*" and later changed to *The Viking,* and also with his set of orchestral variations upon the air of *Three Blind Mice.* As soon as the first work was completed, he wrote to Granville Bantock, who was then the musical director of the Tower, New Brighton, asking him if he would be able to produce the new work there. Mr. Bantock had always been a loyal supporter of native art, and he had also advertised the fact of his intention of inviting the younger composers as well as the older men, such as Parry, Stanford, Cowen, Mackenzie and Corder, to conduct concerts. It was this fact that encouraged Holbrooke to address himself to his brother-musician. The correspondence resulted in a meeting, and Bantock decided to put the new poem into rehearsal. Holbrooke then appeared for the first time as a conductor, and he likes to tell how his strange gestures puzzled the band. The curious and original strains of the new work puzzled the players still more, however, and they were quite unable to cope with its many difficulties as it stood. The young composer was advised that his scoring was quite impossible and could never sound effective, and was

asked to alter it. This he did, reluctantly and against his convictions. The purport of the work then became quite altered. It was performed under Bantock's conductorship late in 1901, and was well received. Later on, it obtained a second hearing at the Queen's Hall with Henry Wood as conductor, but with a new score.

The critics have had much to say concerning the sinister and morbid import of Longfellow's poem, but, to Holbrooke himself, it never possessed that character. To him, it was just an adventure—romantic and picturesque. As to his own opinion concerning it, as compared with his earlier orchestral work, he considers that, though *The Viking* shows musical advance, it is not superior in thought to *The Raven*. The latter he believes to be more organic and a finer conception poetically. He has even said that few of his other works gave him so much satisfaction in the writing.

It was at New Brighton that Holbrooke first met that fine and lucid musical critic, Mr. Ernest Newman, and he has always remained one of his greatest admirers. It was also during his stay at New Brighton that he was advised by Bantock to send his new work, *The Three Blind Mice Variations*, for the consideration of Mr. Henry Wood, the conductor of the Queen's Hall Orchestra. Although many of the composer's earlier efforts had been repeatedly rejected by Mr. Wood, he nevertheless decided to act on Bantock's recommendation, and the Variations were despatched. It resulted in Mr. Wood promising to give a per-

formance of them that season, and they were set down for a hearing in 1901. During the rehearsals the members of the orchestra had an exceedingly busy time in attempting to decipher the composer's manuscripts, for Holbrooke's parts were never noted for tidiness or clearness. Moreover, the work was intricate, so that there was a good deal of pardonable grumbling on the part of the players. However, *la fin couronne les oeuvres*, and the work was most favourably received, both by the audience and the critics, the composer having the satisfaction of seeing himself described by the press afterwards as "the Richard Strauss of England."

In the midst of his creative labours, Holbrooke still found time to continue his work as a teacher, but the number of his pupils was very small. He was, therefore, quite ready to relinquish them when an offer was made to him to become a teacher of music at the Midland Institute, Birmingham, of which Bantock had recently become the Principal. He joyfully accepted it, packed his goods and chattels and departed from London to become a guest in the house of Bantock, where he remained during the whole of his residence in the "forward" city. Bantock's large library was a source of great pleasure to him, and among the literary works with which he regaled himself from its shelves were many of those of Turgeniev, Tolstoi, Zola, Gorky, and Herbert Spencer. For the poetical gifts of Mrs. Bantock he has retained a great admiration.

Whilst living with the Bantocks, Holbrooke made a better acquaintance with the works of

Richard Strauss. It was the delight of himself and his host to play all the arrangements for piano-duet that they could get hold of, though neither musician was able to yield unstinted admiration for that master. Holbrooke, however, particularly admired what he termed the "heavy humour" of *Don Quixote*. It is his opinion that German composers possess no humour in the *true* sense.

It was during this period that his *Queen Mab* was written, but he had no orchestral work performed in Birmingham whilst he was there. In fact, the only one of his compositions that obtained a hearing at all was a chamber work, the *Sextet* (Op. 33 a) for wind instruments, which was played by some of the professors of the Midland Institute at a private concert there.

After a few months he became thoroughly dissatisfied with his work at Birmingham, so that it is not surprising to find him soon returning to London. The next thing that we learn of him then is that a friend has advanced him a small loan, and that he has taken two rooms in the northern suburbs, where he is bravely struggling to maintain himself by taking pupils and by the small royalties that his compositions are beginning to bring in.

But it is a life of great poverty that he is compelled to lead. In order to repay the loan that has been advanced to him, he has to suffer many privations. All his own cooking and cleaning is done with his own hands, and he has to subsist upon the slenderest fare. Sometimes, even, he has not sufficient money to buy meat, and has to substitute

a vegetable diet for it instead. Yet, if the hardships of this time are many, his growth in artistic power is also great, and many of his best orchestral and chamber works are composed in these Bohemian quarters.

Gradually, too, things begin to improve. His choral poem, *Queen Mab,* which had been written during his stay in Birmingham, is accepted by the Leeds Festival Committee for their Festival of 1904. During the rehearsal of this work, Holbrooke has to listen to much grumbling from the orchestral players on account of the difficulty of many of the passages that it contains. The wood-wind and brass parts are of particular difficulty. However, the work is brilliant and goes well, and is so favourably received that the young composer is also asked to supply the Leeds Choral Union with a new work. He gives them "*Byron,*" that is already completed, and it is performed on 7th December, 1904. Splendidly sung by the magnificent chorus of four hundred voices, it proves very successful.

It was about this time that Holbrooke married Miss Dorothy Hadfield, of Rotherham. During his Leeds visit, also, he made many friends, among them being Mr. Andrew Black, Mr. Ben Davies, and Mr. F. R. Spark.

The next orchestral work of his to be performed was "*Ulalume,*" which was given under Mr. Henry Wood's baton, at one of his Symphony concerts in 1905. This work puzzled many of the critics, who completely failed to comprehend its poetical spirit, and many fatuous and unjust things

were written concerning it. These critics could only take note of its strange harmonies and its nebulous fancies, and condemn them both with bitter invective. The remarkable originality of this work has always proved inimical to the chance of it every approaching popularity.

Holbrooke's friendship with Mr. Andrew Black did not terminate with their meeting at Leeds, for, soon after their return to London, the composer received an invitation from the singer to visit him at his house and to bring some of his own songs for his inspection. Fruitful results ensued from this. Mr. Black chose several songs, whilst, through the influence of Mrs. Black, Holbrooke's name obtained a place upon the programme of both the Norwich and the Bristol Festivals of 1905. At the Bristol Festival, Mr. Black sang the dramatic scena *Marino Faliero* in such a magnificent manner as to invoke the composer's enthusiastic gratitude, whilst the *Five Bohemian Songs* were produced at Norwich with great success. For these last comparatively trifling songs Holbrooke managed to obtain a much more considerable sum than he had done for his important works, *Queen Mab, Ulalume, Blind Mice Variations* and *Marino Faliero* together. But the more artistic emanations of a composer's brain are rarely appreciated to the same extent that his more commonplace ideas are. Such are the vagaries of art!

Holbrooke also received a commission at this time from Mrs. Black, a fine pianist and a very talented woman, to write for her a Scotch Fantasia or Scotch

airs for the pianoforte. This he did, but he has never seen the work since, as the family departed for Australia.

The year 1906 was a particularly favourable one for the composer, and his name appeared on all the provincial festival programmes. In the cases of the Birmingham and Hereford festivals, works were commissioned. The Birmingham Festival of this year is memorable for the fact that it contained performances of representative works of the three composers who are the most living forces in modern British music, for, besides Holbrooke's dramatic poem "*The Bells,*" it included Sir Edward Elgar's *The Apostles*, and the first part of Granville Bantock's *Omar Khayyam*. Holbrooke's great work was produced under Richter's baton, and, considering that the conductor did not know the poem, obtained a fairly satisfactory rendering. There was some lack of balance, however, that went to prove that the work would have benefited by further rehearsals. It was received with acclamations in some quarters and with jeering vituperations in others. Better these latter, however, than to be silently passed over as so many festival novelties are! In the opinion of the composer, *The Bells* contains some of his finest and most sustained efforts, and it is probable that a future age will agree with him.

The "*Dreamland Suite*" owed its birth to peculiar circumstances. It had been written some years previous to its production at Hereford for a competition inaugurated by Mr. William Boosey,

the managing director of Chappell & Co. This competition had originated in the following manner: Mr. Boosey had wagered that no Englishman could write a *suite* as tuneful and engaging as Luigini's *Ballet Egyptien*, and the wager had been accepted by a man who contended that a competition open to Englishmen only would prove Mr. Boosey's contentions to be wrong. The late Ebenezer Prout was among the examiners chosen to decide this momentous matter, but no work sent in was deemed by them "worthy of the prize." Mr. George H. Clutsam received a small reward, but Holbrooke's work came back on his hands again, and was later sold outright to one of the publishing firms for twenty guineas! In comparing it now with Luigini's ballet, one marvels at the decisions of the judges, for Holbrooke's *suite* contains four very charming and melodious numbers, whilst Luigini's work is trivial in the extreme. The Hereford audiences were quick to recognise its air of dainty lightness, and the reception that it had was very flattering.

It was about this time that Holbrooke's symphony, "*Les Hommages*," was first produced by Mr. Wood at the Queen's Hall, though this work had been completed in its present form two years before, and had originally been written for a string orchestra four years previous to that. It has, perhaps, proved one of the most powerful of the composer's orchestral compositions, and even critics who had used some of the strongest epithets against the trend of Holbrooke's other works, found

something splendid to say regarding *Les Hommages.*

Holbrooke now began to occupy himself with a new orchestral composition. Mr. Herbert Trench, the critic and poet, having finished a new poem on Immortality, entitled *Apollo and the Seaman,* wrote to the composer asking him if he would set it to music. This Holbrooke finally agreed to do. Much of the music was written in Penmaenmawr, North Wales, where he went "to help the theme," as he describes it. The strongest part of the work, the Finale, was composed whilst he was here, the melody in A minor being particularly impressive. It was largely through the moving nature of this theme that Holbrooke made one of the staunchest friends of his life.

The work took him about four months to write and to score. Trench, who was not a musician, left him a free hand to do what he liked, so that the design of the musical setting is all his own. An arrangement for its performance in the autumn of 1907 at the Queen's Hall, under the conductorship of Mr. Thomas Beecham, whom Holbrooke was helping with all his keen enthusiasm for new men, was then made. A few difficulties in the way of its performance occurred, however. The composer had made use of a bass sarrusophone in E flat in his score, and there were no players of this little known instrument in England. He and Mr. Beecham made a special journey to Paris in search of a competent performer upon it, and spent an amusing time there. After much trouble, they dis-

covered a Monsieur Doloville, a fine artist and teacher, who agreed to cross the Channel and play the part that was lacking. Unfortunately, when he arrived, it appeared that he had not the lowest instrument, so that several of the deepest notes, for which the composer had especially wanted him, were lost.

*Apollo and the Seaman* was produced with original and rather startling effects. A screen was stretched partly across the orchestra, and the text of the poem was thrown upon it by a magic lantern during the performance of the music. The idea of this latter innovation was originated by the poet. Holbrooke knew nothing of it at the time that he accepted the offer to write his score. The experiment to his mind was not a successful one altogether, and he has since expressed an opinion that it is impossible to engage two senses at once. Opera, of course, stands outside this *dictum,* for here stage action and music combine to their mutual advantage, and each line of the drama has, or should have, its corresponding musical equivalent; but in a choral work dealing with a subject from a *narrative* point of view, the relation of music and poetry is not necessarily so exact, and we get general suggestions of the poet's mood in the music rather than a detailed portraiture.

The concert at which this orchestral poem was performed was well attended, and its reception notable, even the most conservative critics being bound to admit that the work possessed powerful thoughts. The opulence of the orchestral colouring, also,

could not be overlooked, though there was much condemnation of the large number of instruments employed, which, in many cases, was considered detrimental to the clarity of representation of the thematic material. Of course, the employment of the sarrusophones came in for special castigation! The big orchestras required by Holbrooke to carry out his musical intentions have always been a matter of contention between himself and conductors, but there can be no doubt he has greatly enriched the tonal effect by certain of his original combinations. Those who have had the advantage of hearing a performance of *The Bells* will not forget the excellent effect of the use of concertinas in that work, though the great Hans Richter was greatly averse to their introduction. *Apollo and the Seaman* has been performed several times since its initial performance, and each repetition of the work has served to reveal new beauties.

The same year, 1907, witnessed the performance of some of Holbrooke's other works at the Belgian Festival. On this occasion, he was the only English composer represented.

The next important composition of Holbrooke's was his *Dramatic Choral Symphony*. This creation was inspired by four poems of the composer's favourite poet, Edgar Allan Poe, to whom so much of his work owes its impulse. The poems on which the new symphony was founded were *The Haunted Palace, Hymn to the Virgin, The City in the Sea,* and *The Valley Nis*. It was not completed until the year 1908, though six years went to the

making of it. Two of its movements were performed at the Bristol Festival in 1907, but the complete rendering of the work was first given by the Leeds Choral Union in 1908, and was conducted by the composer. Holbrooke has said that this is the last musical poem that he is likely to write on subjects taken from Poe's works, as he considers that he has now utilised all the best of them.

During the past few years, owing to the "fee" question, Holbrooke's works have been rigorously excluded from the big festival programmes. This is an injustice both to himself and to British art in general. It is also depriving the British public of the chance of following the artistic advance of one of its most intellectual musicians. Weak and insipid compositions are foisted upon it by the score, but why should it be debarred from hearing work of the vital strength of which Holbrooke is capable? It is a crying disgrace in an age of musical shams. When our prophets come, we stone them. We don't quite like their methods, and so we do our best to kill the souls of them. There is too much of the personal element affecting our musical life. A man's *art*, to every earnest sympathiser, should stand apart from everything else. If it is good, it is for humanity's benefit that it should be encouraged; if it is bad, then time will quickly place an obliterating hand upon it. But let there be no jealousies—no petty animosities and bickerings. They are detrimental to the cause for which all true artists should work. They are a sign of ignorance and of crass selfishness too, and I think

that Holbrooke has had to suffer much from the slings and arrows of his less talented contemporaries.

Apart from the neglect of Festival Committees to produce anything from the pen of this composer, it is seldom that we hear *any* of his orchestral works performed at orchestral concerts. At one time, Henry Wood did much to spread the knowledge of the composer's striking genius, but of late years he has done little in the way of exploiting it. All honour, then, to Beecham, who has recently presented many of Holbrooke's works, and shown, once again, what an individual force this composer is in English music!

The exclusion of Holbrooke's work from the programmes of the big festivals has had an excellent result, however. It has given him time to proceed with operas—work that has long been present in his mind. There is an operatic trilogy—*The Cauldron of Math*—to words of T. E. Ellis (Lord Howard de Walden) upon a Welsh subject. Of this trilogy, the first and second parts, *The Children of Don* and *Dylan* are completed, and the third part, *Bronwen,* is well advanced. Of the wealth of imaginative genius contained in these magnificent creations much will be said later. This large undertaking is not the composer's first attempt at writing for the stage, for he wrote a work of somewhat lurid character, *Varenka,* several years ago, whilst his charming little lyrical music-drama *Pierrot and Pierrette* was produced at "His Majesty's" Theatre in November, 1909. *The*

*Children of Don* and *Dylan*, however, remain the greatest works that Holbrooke has yet penned, and they rank with the very highest achievements of British art.

Another important work is the poem for grand orchestra and piano, *The Song of Gwyn-ap-Nudd*, which was first performed at the Queen's Hall in 1903, conducted by the composer.

It may be interesting to note that Holbrooke hopes to write a large work on a scriptural subject some day, and much of his music indicates that he would be well qualified for the task.

It now becomes time to make some mention of the concerts that, since 1902, Holbrooke has given in different parts of the country. These concerts originated in the following manner. For six years the composer had tried, without success, to gain the "Lesley Alexander" Prize, but at length, in 1901, he managed to carry it off with his "Soul" *Sextet No. 2 Op. 33a*. This work had originally been written as a Quintet for flute, clarinet, horn, bassoon and piano, when he was a student under Mr. Frederick Corder. By adding an oboe part, he converted it into a Sextet and bore off the prize of twenty pounds for which he had so long competed. This sextet is also arranged for two violins, two violas, violoncello and piano, and finds a place among his published chamber works.

With the money thus obtained he formulated a scheme for two chamber concerts at the Steinway Hall. The first programme was made up chiefly

of his own works, and included the *G minor Trio* (*Op.* 21) (now a quartet), the *Quintet* (*Op.* 46) "*In Memoriam*" (now a sextet), the *Quintet* (*Op.* 20*a*) "*Dances*" (now a sextet), and a few lesser works. At this concert Holbrooke played Balakireff's *Islamey,* a composition which he considered to rank with some of the finest things written for the piano. He also played, for the first time in England, A. Scriabin's *First Sonata in F minor* for piano, a gloomy but powerful work.

Though the press notices of this venture were flattering, the result was by no means encouraging from a financial point of view! At the second concert, however, things were a little brighter. Other English composers became anxious to join the enterprise and to have some of their works included in the programme. By this means, a larger sale of tickets was ensured. A *piano Sonata* (*Op.* 32), by J. D. Davis, and a *Trio Fantasie* (*Op.* 11), for pianoforte, violin and violoncello, by Alfred H. Barley, were performed, whilst Holbrooke was represented by his *Quintet* (*Op.* 27) and a small violin piece.

In spite of the rather poor results, Holbrooke continued his enterprise, and, before long, his audiences began to grow larger and matters to improve generally. His concerts were no longer confined to the metropolitan area, and the provinces were toured with considerable success. Often, in the early days of his career as a concert-giver, he would himself carry round posters to shopkeepers who he thought would be willing to exhibit them

in their windows. It was his custom, too, to write analytical notes on the works performed for his programmes!

Holbrooke has always been a fighter for the cause of English music, and his *confrères* in the art have had much reason for gratitude towards him. He is not one of those composers who seek "to wax great by others waning," but he has been responsible for the performance of many an interesting work that, but for his untiring energy would probably have had to wait many weary months before its public representation. Even if this has not always been of particular benefit to its composer, it is something, in an age where high aims are so little encouraged, to be able to boast of even *one* performance of an art-work. How many musicians in Great Britain can point to such a record of help to his fellow composers?—entirely ignored, by the way, in our press. Amongst the names of British composers whose music has been heard at Holbrooke's concerts might be mentioned the following:—Sir Edward Elgar, Granville Bantock, Cyril Scott, John Ireland, Fritz Delius, Coleridge Taylor, Ernest Austin, Algernon Ashton, Julius Harrison, S. T. Hawley, H. Balfour-Gardener, H. V. Jervis-Read, Roger Quilter, Roger Ascham, A. H. Barley, J. D. Davis, T. Tertius Noble, Edwin Evans, W. Wallace, K. Ivey, J. Speaight, Norman O'Neill, Ernest Blake, R. K. Matthew, H. Walford Davies, T. S. Dunhill, F. C. Nicholls, Norman Wilks, Donald Ferguson, Augustus Smith, Ethel Barns, John Pul-

lein, A. Bax, Edward Agate, Edith Swepstone, K. Waldo Warner, Dan Boyes, Ernest Walker, Arthur Fagge, Frank Bridge, and many others.

A goodly list, truly!

It will have been seen from the past narration of some of the leading events of Holbrooke's life that nature did not frame him for a career of cradled ease. He has experienced the anxious privations of poverty as other composers have done before him, but it is possible that his music has greatly benefited by the hardships through which he has passed. Schubert used to say that his greatest music was born out of his greatest miseries, and the wonderful songs of Hugo Wolf doubtless owe their intensity to the same cause. It is such men who often see the highest visions. Life to them is not a playground to sport about upon, but a school where the philosophy of humanity is learnt. The musician who is surrounded by sycophantic adulation never gets to the heart of things. Mendelssohn was a case to the point. The *great* musician always stands to a large extent alone. His originality places him somewhat apart from his fellows, and many misconceptions are always rampant concerning him. "Points have we all of us within our souls where all stand single"; and our finest geniuses often seem rather remote from us, until another age, in accordance with the evolutionary principle, brings us more into line with their thoughts and teachings.

Art has been described by Véron as "the manifestation of emotion obtaining external interpreta-

tion, now by expressive arrangements of line, form or colour, now by a series of gestures, sounds or words governed by particular rhythmical cadence." Some minds are more receptive than others, and are able to follow the workings of another man's brain with a sort of telepathic sympathy. Soul is quick to respond to soul, and the external interpretation of emotion through the eye or the ear will evoke a similar state of mentality in the spectator or the listener to that of the creative artist. Other minds do not possess this power, and are receptive only to what tickles pleasurably the organs of sight and hearing. Sometimes, they are too indolent to be otherwise and are purposely blind and deaf to anything that induces them to active *thought*.

The music of Holbrooke will always be misunderstood by many, if only for the fact that it is intellectually original. They will not let their minds become receptive to the fine qualities that distinguish it. They listen to it with only half of their faculties awake, and let the other half slumber out of the desire to save themselves the brain-fag of trying to enter into the comprehension of the composer's own mental outlook. They then greet it with howls of execration and call it cacophonic, morbid and grotesque, thinking, by these epithets, to have made a complete summary of its character. But have they really done so? Is not the music more often full of vitality and power?—is it not, generally, melodious and full of charm?—is it not often very deeply felt and very human?—and does

it not often show a fine sense of psychological fitness? Holbrooke's genius, indeed, stretches in many directions, and its boundaries are not cramped. To know his music thoroughly is to be brought into view of new worlds. One stands on Pisgah and looks towards wider horizons.

The composer is comparatively young, and his music is generally full of a youthful vigour and impulse. In spite of its very occasional morbidity, it is never decadent. Sanity and vitality are generally its chief characteristics. These are the qualities that one would expect from a man of Holbrooke's energetic disposition and warm enthusiasms. "Hard work" has always been his motto, and his compositions include six operas, eight orchestral poems, two symphonies, three orchestral suites, three sets of orchestral variations, a trio, sextets, quintets, quartets, upwards of forty pieces for violin and piano, upwards of seventy piano solos, about seventy songs, and other smaller compositions. In addition to these, he has done much journalistic work, and has also had his own concerts and a voluminous correspondence to attend to. Thus it will be seen that he has not been idle! In fact, he is never so happy as when his days are full of work. Even his pet hobbies attest this. These are travelling, motor-cycling, gardening, writing music and talking. He considers that the bulk of his melodic invention has owed its genesis to motor-cycling and travelling.

Concerning the relationship between music and exercise, Plato had much to say that was interesting

—"These who are conversant in nothing but mere exercises turn out to be more rustic than is becoming; and they again who mind music alone are more soft than is for their honour. . . . Whoever then shall in the most handsome manner mingle exercise with music, and have these in the justest measure in his soul, him, we shall most properly call the most completely musical." Plato was evidently a believer in *mens sana in corpore sano,* and it is this sanity of imagination that attracts one to Holbrooke's music. It does not speak the language of the idle dreamer lulled in opiate slumbers as much modern music does. Holbrooke, indeed, is too full of mental and physical activity to indulge in any states of *dolce far niente*. Sometimes, indeed, his music is marred by the impulsiveness due to this almost abnormally active state.

He knows, however, that, as Dante makes Virgil say in his *Inferno,* "not on downy plumes, nor under shade of canopy reposing, fame is won." And Holbrooke longs for fame as other fine creative artists have done before him. He wants to obtain the recognition of his genius in his lifetime. Whatever treatment he receives from critics, conductors, pianists and singers—whatever personal jealousies he arouses—he still goes on working, and in this way finds a panacea for many bitternesses. He knows full well the significance of the old Latin adage, *Faber quisque fortunae suae*—every man is the architect of his own fortune—and he has had the strength and the originality to keep afloat upon the

tide which he feels may one day lead him on to fortune and, unlike discouraged weaklings, he refuses to go under. He knows the value of his own art; and if others fail to perceive it now, what does that matter? Like Napoleon, he has said, "There shall be no Alps," for, one day, he feels that posterity will set its hall-mark upon his music as it has upon the music of other hard-working men who have toiled on in the face of misunderstanding, doubt and neglect. He knows, too, that fine thoughts may live long after actions that make a great stir in the world are forgotten. As Hume once said, more people think about Virgil and Homer than ever trouble their heads about Caesar and Alexander. The pen is mightier than the sword in the long run.

To Holbrooke, his art is his life—I might almost say his idol. Everything centres around it. No Roman ever treasured his *Penates* more jealously than Holbrooke guards his music; if other men decry it, he, at least, is there to defend it. He is no Laodicean with regard to his own powers.

It is this dogged perseverance that appeals to one's admiration. It is the survival of the fighting instinct of a primitive age, and it has helped the composer to break down many barriers that a more pusillanimous competitor would have been unable to do. Through untiring energy nearly all his works have been published, whilst his name has appeared upon Festival programmes at an age when most composers are only just beginning to feel their feet beneath them.

All Holbrooke's tendencies are particularly modern. He lives in this age and in its atmosphere, and has no great sympathies with byegone times. Neither Shakespeare or Bach appeal to him in any great degree. His favourite authors are Tolstoi, Carlyle, Zola and Poe, and his music reflects the modernity of his literary tastes. It is built on no stereotyped pattern, and scorns to cling to jejune and outworn formulas out of conventional respect. But it does not do this out of irreverence for old age. *Autres temps autres moeurs.* Holbrooke finds himself unable to express his individuality in music wearing the garb of his ancestors. A more strenuous age requires less regulated forms for conveying its spirit, and so he frees himself from the burdens of the past. The idiom of his music is sometimes uncouth and sometimes ponderous, but it is of remarkable originality. And this originality is not a thing that is sought for with much anxiety and turbulence of mind. It is quite spontaneous and natural to the composer. We do not feel that he is resorting to all sorts of devices to evade the obvious as we do with so many modern composers. He is by no means a *poseur* in his art. He possesses a mind, too, pregnant with musical ideas, and he has a wonderful facility for inventing thematic material. This is particularly evidenced in the music of his later years. Some of his earlier compositions, especially those of small design, it is true, show many signs of eclecticism, but this is a weakness to which all juvenile composers are prone.

His later works, however, are singularly free from this defect.

Holbrooke is, perhaps, more successful in dealing with concrete than with abstract ideas, for most of his best music has been suggested by some definite pictorial subject. He has, indeed, a fine power of depicting strange scenes and situations to the mental vision by means of a masterly sense of tone colour. He paints with all that wealth of detail that distinguished the pre-Raphaelite school of painting, and endeavours to give every little *nuance* its place in the picture. His music is often full of luminous and magical suggestion, and his imaginative insight is very penetrating and sensitive. His mind ranges over widely different subjects with the same quickness of perception and ease in formulating his impressions. From the haunting terrors of *The Raven, Ulalume* and *The Bells* to the dignified tragedy of *The Children of Don, Dylan* and *The Song of Gwyn ap Nudd* and to the broad comedy of *The Three Blind Mice Variations,* how wide a gulf there lies! Yet the same masterhand is observable at the helm of each. Occasionally, it is true, we find the composer running to lees and producing work quite unworthy of him, and his choice of subjects is not always to be commended. In certain cases, too, his music is somewhat unregulated, though it can rarely be described as chaotic.

Holbrooke has said that his supreme idea of music is and always has been *melody* first, *rhythm* second, and *harmony* third, and, in the opinion of the pre-

sent writer, his work well bears out that assertion. Melody abounds in the many pages that he has written, though it is not generally the melody of "sugary" sweetness nor of regularly constructed musical sentences. It is rather the melody of more rugged flavour, full of vital import, and often full of dynamic force. As to its rhythmic variety, few modern composers have been more prolific than Holbrooke in this respect. His music abounds in original little turns and oddities of rhythm. His harmony, too, is of great individuality, though occasionally unpolished, but if some of his effects have been distinguished for their ugliness, there are others of exceeding beauty to counter-balance them.

Though Holbrooke has urged the claim of melody as the primary qualification for musical composition, there are many critics who have professed to find no signs of it in his own work. Wagner had to bear the same reproach in his day, but the world has grown wiser since then. Our great men teach us new languages that are not learnt in a day. But in the end they often become the speech of mankind. The true gift of melody is not always to be found in facile, flowing patterns of time-honoured fashion, but also in less regular phrases and more individual shapings of rhythm. Melody of the former type may be found in abundance in many of Holbrooke's early pianoforte pieces and songs, but they do not represent his finest work, such as the best of the orchestral poems and the drama *Dylan* do. Critics may find pleasure

in setting up these works as scarecrows for the shafts of their ridicule, but custom may one day make them their perch and not their laughing-stocks. However, after all, as Clytemnestra says in "The Eumenides," "reproaches are the pricks that goad the wise," and the main thing for posterity is the fact that the composer continues steadily working with apparent *insouciance* of the gibes of those who have not understood him. "The labour we delight in physics pain"—and Holbrooke is one of the most systematic labourers at his own art.

Holbrooke's personality has also been largely responsible for the amount of opposition that he has received. He is not a man of reticences, and what his heart feels, his tongue speaks without any *arrière pensée*. He is fond of talking, and nobody talks much who does not say unwise things at times. Being impulsive by nature and very open in character, he is apt to commit indiscretions which he afterwards regrets. He is his own worst enemy, and is well aware of the fact. The hard struggles of his early years, however, left him self-reliant, and he has had to fight bravely and tenaciously for the position that he has gained. If he has dealt some rather straight blows in his time, they were often necessary to maintain his *prestige* as an artist. The success that he has achieved has been due to his genius and energy alone, and men of genius are hardly to be judged by the ordinary standards. If he has been somewhat scathing in his criticisms of some men and their doings, it

should also be remembered how generous he has been in his defence of the aims of the young English school of music, and how much he has done to further the cause of national talent generally.

The popular impression of Holbrooke appears to be that he is a man of unregulated impulses, entirely self-centred, but by no means self-critical. This is quite an erroneous view of the man. Impulsive he undoubtedly is, and this characteristic often creeps into his work, but he rarely allows his musical ideas to appear in print until they have been approved by his calmer thought. Self-centred he cannot be truthfully dubbed, for he is ever seeking for new talent in others, and generous in his appreciation when he believes that he has found it. That his thoughts are dominated by music is true, and that he has no false modesty in hesitating to attest his belief in the merits of much of his own creative work is also true! But that is another matter! The music, itself, is the first consideration, whether that of himself or of anyone else. To say that he is not self-critical is *entirely* false. Most of his music passes through many crucibles of thought before it reaches its final form. A review of his general work soon gives evidence of this. Many of his scores have been greatly altered since their first conception. Trios have been changed into quartets and quintets into sextets; pieces written for the 'cello have been converted into violin pieces and *vice-versa;* and the orchestration of certain other works has been entirely remodelled. In addition to this, there have

been some compositions with which the composer has become ultimately dissatisfied, and these he has had no hesitation in destroying. Among this list might be mentioned an *Ode to Victory,* an *Empire Ode,* a cantata *Heaven and Earth,* an overture *The New Renaissance,* an *Early Opera* and an *Oriental Fantasie!!* Such wholesale slaughter is hardly the act of a man who lacks self-criticism.

In judging Holbrooke's works, it should be remembered that the order of many of the opus numbers does not quite represent the order in which those works were written. There has been a considerable shuffling in these numbers from time to time, and it is not always easy to classify his compositions. The list given at the end of this volume may be taken as fairly accurate, however.

It would be futile to endeavour to predict the future in store for Holbrooke's music, but the composer has gone on from strength to strength, and we may look forward with confidence to the further evolution of his genius. That English music has made a great advance during the last few decades, there can be no doubt. But we must not be too puffed up by insular pride. There is still much to be done. Dogmatic assertions as to the course which our *zukunstmusik* is likely to take are useless, but I fancy that it will lie somewhere in the direction that our best modern English composers are travelling. But we have no oracle of Delphi to whom we may appeal in order "to sound the bottom of the aftertimes."

Holbrooke's music, as we have seen, is modern

in all it tendencies. We rarely find in it the calm peacefulness of the old masters, but are confronted with the restlessness and fever of life instead. It is particularly characteristic of our present-day English mode of living in this respect, and only the spirit of the present time could have called it forth; and as Goethe makes Faust say to Wagner in his drama:

> "What spirit of the times you call
> Good sirs, is but your spirit after all
> In which the times are seen reflected."

## CHAPTER II

### THE CRITIC AND HIS WORK

MOST of Holbrooke's work in musical criticism has been done in "The Saturday Review," the "New Age," and the "English Review," though he has occasionally contributed to other journals. He has written much under his own name, but he has also used various *noms-de-plume*—such as "Phoenix," "Saint Joseph," "The Raven," and "Ixion"—in other cases.

His criticisms scarcely touch upon the music of the older masters at all, but his pen has been almost exclusively dedicated to advancing the cause of modern music, and of the English composers in particular, and to showing up the abuses and absurdities that deface our musical life. These matters are of far more vital importance to him than the claims of ancient art.

His style of writing is singularly galvanic and impulsive. When he wishes to score a point he often does so in language as forcible as the blow of a hammer. Generally, though, he expresses

his opinions in a confidential chatty sort of manner, which, in spite of occasional outbursts of vehemence, are never delivered in the *ex cathedra* fashion so much favoured by more dogmatic critics. The personal note is nearly always sounded in his writings. He pens these critical articles not only on behalf of English music generally, but also with the attempted object of removing the hindrances that bar the progress of his own art work.

But however much he may feel the neglect that good native art suffers in this country, he is never bitter. He has the saving quality of humour that enables him to take a broad outlook on men and things in general. He is cynical at times and severe at times, but his ready wit redeems his assertions from all trace of vindictiveness. And he has no aversion to turning his wit against himself either.

As to his judgments on musical matters, these are not always sufficiently *raisonnés*. The impulsiveness of his nature leads him to sudden enthusiasms and to too hastily expressed opinions. A good critical balance is not therefore maintained in his writings. His great sympathy with English art often leads him to over-estimate the value of much of it, whilst in his zeal he often neglects the just claims of the foreigner.

His opinions of the work of different composers, however, is interesting. Of Wagner's *Ring*, he says: "The music of the 'Ring' is one long sermon, and it is not going to grow in favour as

time goes on. The interminable yawns of Wotan and the still more trying episode of Brunnhilde in the 'Gotterdamerung' will be remembered. They are cases to the point.

"I do not know in the whole realm of operatic endeavour a more wearisome entertainment than the 'Ring' without cuts. Wagner, to my mind, was always too long winded, even in 'Rienzi,' 'Lohengrin,' and the earlier operas. But he seems to have saved himself up with a vengeance for the 'Mastersinger' and the 'Ring,' the result being the most conclusive proof of Wagner's mighty power as a musician pure and simple, and the most fearful proof of his incapacity in his so-called philosophy the world has yet seen."

In another place, too, he speaks of the plot of the "Ring" as being "a most extraordinary and illogical piece of work," and continues:

"The 'Ring,' as my readers may very well know, is made the *raison d'être* of this gigantic scheme; but it seems to me that every one who is unfortunate enough to possess the ring has no power at all with it. Yet the teaching of Wagner's 'potted' version of these legends makes the ring all-powerful to those who possess it—although at the same time a fearful curse is attached to it—and yet no one, not even Brunnhilde, can use the power when she is attacked by Siegfried in the 'Dusk of the Gods.'"

For Hugo Wolf's songs, Holbrooke has no great admiration, though, as he says, "his indubitable power cannot be blinked at by any musician worthy

of the name," and he goes on to add some qualifying words:

"Wagner met him with scant courtesy: even near to contumely. It is strange! Perhaps the terrible furnace we all, as artists, have to go through makes many of us impervious to merit elsewhere; yet the effect should be quite the opposite."

Our composer, however, has a great admiration for Richard Strauss, whom he considers "the greatest musical tone-painter in the world." After hearing the "Sinfonia Domestica," however, he says that, in his opinion, it contains "a vast deal of 'horrid noise'—pure and unadulterated horrid noise." He thinks that Mr. H. G. Wells might give an explanation of it, "for no one on earth could so well divine these mammoth noises." His opinion of Sibeluis is far from flattering, though he has a few words of praise for two of his symphonies; but he considers the songs "horrid" and the piano pieces "stupid," rivalling "Weingartner in stodge and Reger in clumsiness." For the work of Mahler and Bruckner he has little sympathy, though he professes to find some of the music of Saint-Saens "pretty."

To turn next to Holbrooke's opinion of the work of some of our English musicians, we find him holding a high opinion of Elgar's work, and speaking of the beautiful "tone poem" "Gerontius," which he does not think the composer will ever surpass. He likes Bantock's piano pieces, and also many of his songs. For the work of Delius he has also an immense admiration, and

says: "The 'Shelley' songs by Delius, or some of the 'Sappho' songs by Bantock, bring us all close together, where we have the welfare of English music at heart."

Holbrooke also has words of appreciation for Sullivan's "charming gift for lyric melody with an utter absence of commonplace." He adds, "At least Sullivan made many, many of us happy, under his light spell: this is more than can be said of the 'heavy heavies'—and the profound big-wigs, who at present reign at our colleges, and regale us every year with a half-dozen 'masterpieces.'"

He considers that Edward Agate's songs show great genius—"It is revealed in his harmony; in his most original atmosphere; and greatest of all, in his melodies." His opinion of Albert Mallinson is that he has "been guilty of some of the strongest English songs and some of the weakest"—that he distinctly belongs to "lyric," and he is not happy in mystic or nebulous worlds—but that "his *Songs of Sappho* bid fair to raise English art a heap."

Speaking of the most characteristic qualities of English music of the *old* school, he describes it as "good, correct harmony, straightforward melodic line, and a frock-coated sense of form, which puts a 'clergymanic' pall over us." He continues: "I confess this sort of music, listened to with pleasure, as it may be, by the heads of our teaching academies and universities, does not interest me a small bit. . . .

"England's music craves a *character*, and that

right soon. A strong one that will be, like the nation; not a barley-water mixture of common tunes and conceptions, with this chronic absence of warm colouring; in other words, that much-abused word, and scarce quality, original imagination."

And Holbrooke believes that a better state of musical art is beginning to dawn in England, for he says: "We have no piano literature to vie with Schumann or Beethoven, but I think this will come. Our versatility in art at present is really amazing; and far superior to Russia, Germany or France. Where can any other race show so many departments or varieties of endeavour? Our outlook is big in song, orchestra, chamber-music, drama and opera."

But he sees the danger in the path of modern musicians and the weakness that mars so much of their work, for, in another place, he says concerning musical advance, "Apart from the men who feel deeply and are few in number, I should unhesitatingly say that the advance is in technique. The great preponderance of composers of our time are expressing technique only; and true, deep, feeling is absent. The result is that music is getting scientific, which I deprecate greatly, instead of being emotional or, I should prefer to say, being impressionic of ideas, if I may coin a word for myself. Candidly, I believe that ideas are scarce. What is not scarce is the power of building up sound. You can get as many men as would stretch from here to the North Pole to build you up a Gargantuan mountain of sound with a Gargantuan

number of instruments. Many of those who do not like my work—oh! I know a lot of them exist—might say that I include myself in this category, for I am known for incorporating many new instruments in my orchestra. I do this, however, not for the sake of developing sound, but because of the new colours and pictures which the poems I select for setting evoke and seem to demand from me, for modern poetry has in it more imagery than that of the dead and gone poets. . . . As I have said, it is technique which is obsessing the whole musical atmosphere at present. It fills up all kinds of voids in which musical feeling is absent. To me the modern trend of music is Satanic. It seems to express a Paganism which I strongly deprecate. It goes against faith, and when a man comes out who is imbued with faith like Elgar, he is at once a luminous figure. Elgar's work is always religious, and I use the word in its broadest sense, not narrowing it to any sect or creed. In that respect he is like César Franck, who is, to my mind, one of the greatest modern masters. So far as the future goes, I feel that music is going to deal more and more with poetry. The two together begin to form a speech, and it is my belief that in time to come music will be, as Mr. William Wallace recently hinted, the ethics of the world."

In spite of the great improvement manifested in English music of late years, Holbrooke is quick to recognise the small support that it receives from both the publisher and the nation at large. He writes: "Among the highest classes of our Society

there is no evident *desire* to get on close terms with their own art work. Nearly the whole of the nation is *commercial* in instinct. Hence our wealth. This all-pervading atmosphere of the business-side of things will for ever kill any deep-rooted artistic power. The proof is in the trouble at present existing with all our publishers. They all, to a man, cater solely for what they know they will have a fair or good market for. They do *not,* once in fifty cases, invest in a Symphony, Sonata, or chamber-work; they do not ever make such an exception! Thus the iniquitous state of things existing. After all, we do most fervently desire a School of our own in opera, chamber-music, symphony and song. But the rich must make a little sacrifice for it, or the flower will wither—if it is not already withering. This is my terminus. We *have* the young men honestly I believe, but we must do something for them; if they are content to remain poor, surely we do not also want them to die?"

He suggests that the young English musician might receive much greater benefit than he does from the "Patron's Fund," a grant of some twenty-seven thousand pounds from Mr. Ernest Palmer to advance the general cause of music in this country. At present, he points out that the only result of the grant is that "we give a couple of concerts a year, of works that we think worthy of performance, and we help indigent fiddlers and hare-brained pianists to go to the 'vaterland' to 'finish' their studies. We bring out periodically young songsters, and

we, at times, produce works of the old masters which rarely get a chance in the programmes of to-day!"

He complains that the young composer obtains little advantage by this grant. Why not put aside some of the "fund" to publish and perform often, some of the most promising works of high aim of young British art, he asks! The cause of musical advance would be much better benefited by these means. In another place he suggests that all artists should club up in a shilling fund, to the establishment of a capital to publish and perform a work or works. He is always very earnest and enthusiastic in the cause of British music.

Concerning music in general, and his own in particular, Holbrooke has much that is interesting to say.

"Music is an expression of feeling, and if I may say so, it is a case of very intense feeling. When you thoroughly realise this, that it is the expression of feeling and nothing more, then you will appreciate my contention that the man who can feel deeply, who has had to feel deeply, and is feeling deeply over the circumstances of his own life, and of life in general, will feel music more than others, or, given the divine and beautiful gift of music, will write the finest music. I do not think it matters in a measure whether he has been taught or not. Teaching, in large measure, is thrown away when it comes to the expression of ideas, and at best it helps only in small details. That, at least, is my experience, though I am perfectly free to admit that

a great many people believe that teaching makes a musician! It is for this reason that there are so many disappointed students. Teaching makes nothing but a teacher.

"From what I have said, you will gather that, in my belief, all my music is the song of my own feelings, as I believe that the music of all other musicians is the song of their own feelings. If a man honestly feels, he will make other people feel, and this is what Wagner did. If he does not honestly feel, or if his work is only the work of teaching, he will not do any good. Schubert, who had no teaching worth speaking about, wrote a colossal amount of music, and has hit the world harder than most other men. I mean, of course, in music. He has expressed himself in the terms I have spoken of—of very intense emotion, which he himself experienced."

Holbrooke has very definite ideas concerning the weaknesses of "programme music" and the limitations of his art generally.

"The hopeless conception of music is that it can do anything. I don't believe it. I never have believed it, and I never shall believe it. I know music can do hardly anything. My reason for this belief is that it is absolutely indefinite. It is something you cannot seize upon and hold: it is in the air. Personally, I wish it was not so limited in its scope, for then one might be able to do 'something' with it! As it is, it dwells in tones, and that is such a nebulous quality one cannot relegate it to any particular sphere. It belongs to all parts

of our universe like the atmosphere. I may go so far as to say that in my opinion wireless telegraphy and music are both to be married, if I may use the expression. Wireless telegraphy depends on electricity, and I think music is an electrical condition of the brain. . . . It is really all suggestion, not expression. Music *can* express love and happiness as well as sorrow, but if I wanted to prove to you the narrowness of the limits of music, I might write a love theme which was full of warmth and movement, and anyone hearing it and being asked to state what impression it conveyed to his mind, might reply that it illustrated the busy life of a factory! Personally, I am free to admit that I should not be offended at such a description, for I appreciate the limits of music in expressing concrete ideas. Besides, love is a questionable feeling. It varies with the individual, and therefore its musical expression must vary in the same way. My idea may be higher or lower than that of the next man, and if our ideas of the thing itself vary, it follows that the expression of them must also vary. For this reason I believe that everyone should listen to music with his own ears, and should find out for himself what it means to him, and no one should be ashamed of stating what that meaning is. As I have said, the same piece of music may mean something different to every different person. In exactly the same way, although the words of a poem must convey the same thought to everyone because the words mean only that and nothing more, yet, out of that poem, different men

may get different ideas, possibly even for other poems, and the same man may get different ideas at different times. In other words, an emotional art cannot be moulded to one form and compelled to retain that form at all times and all seasons. Music, then, is the most suggestive art in the world. In that capacity I give it you : there is an unlimited power behind it, possessed by no other art."

Holbrooke warns the young composer against *trying* to be original in music, for, as he says, "It won't come off; it never has done; and it never will : it will fool and 'bespangle' his listeners for awhile; and then the 'effort' wears like a funny story told too many times."

He also expresses himself as a revolutionary against modern conservatism in many instances. With regard to "musical form" he says :

"To my mind, music is travelling in only one direction. This is the direction in which it has been going since the era of John Sebastian Bach. The direction is towards a more highly-developed technique and intensity of expression. Apart from that there is nothing. I suppose this view will be a fearful blow to the people who are always talking about form in music. By this they mean the form which has been built up by the classical composers. These people go about talking of symphonies and sonatas which are supposed to fill all the needs of a modern civilisation. They refuse to admit that a modern man will not and cannot be bound down to the principles that governed the older composers."

These views, however, are considerably modified in the following words:

"The strict style of development is still with us; and we, moreover, feel a void when we have it not. I have, and always have had, a great respect and admiration for all 'form'; it is the living and vital force in *all* great classic art. Without it, we are confronted with the most insane things, from so-called young composers, young painters, young writers, etc., in 'symphonic poems,' 'nocturnes,' etc. Where 'form' is not, a 'symphonic poem' is usually found! I speak largely when I say 'form.' I am glad of any kind of 'form' if the great classical pillar is not of the power of our writers, as it evidently is by its scarcity."

With regard to harmonic freedom, Holbrooke, in commenting on the work of one of his contemporaries, says, concerning his extraordinary use of discords, "They are not resolved, and I do not wish them resolved. . . ."

The composer's opinions as to the weakness of "programme music" have already been quoted, and he says in another place: "Let programme music beaters then shudder at the incomplete means of music, and return to absolute music or the wedding of music with poetry." For according to another observation: "The 'Symphonic-Poem' which I have decided to abandon—that for elaborate orchestra, *speaking alone*—is not going to be a staple commodity. This I feel. . . . No one cares what the Symphonic Poems of Richard Strauss mean; they like the music, and there it ends."

Concerning the flaws that undermine our musical system, Holbrooke is particularly scathing in his remarks concerning the treatment meted out to English composers at our large musical festivals. He writes:

"Regarding Provincial Festivals of Music—there can be only one opinion—for good. Good for what? Well, here many of us must hesitate—for of late there has been a mania for conductors, while a little while ago it was for *prima-donnas!* To any fair mind the benefit of all such Festivals, whether inaugurated for charity or otherwise, should affect mostly the *creator* of the music. I venture to ask, does it? The artist who fills his programme with his intellectual produce gets, in most cases, no funds, but some mention in the press, which, although interesting, is very unfair. The singers had the salary of yore; now the conductor steps in. Perhaps *the creator of music Festivals* will come next—and last! I remember Dvořák asking (poor man) for his expenses in travelling of a Festival Secretary here (Norwich), and being refused! Music Festivals will soon be *for music* and its makers: then charity—and conductors (some of them swallow the whole profits of a festival) will come in their proper place."

Holbrooke himself has nearly always asked a fee for conducting his works at Festivals, whilst he has also asked for his travelling expenses, considering that a composer and a labourer should at least be worthy of his hire. If all composers were to make as firm a stand as he has done, there might even-

tually be a better balanced and more equitable distribution of the fees paid out by the different Festival Committees. As it is, Holbrooke's name has not appeared on Festival programmes for some time. Has his independence of action in demanding payment for his work been the cause of this? If so, the cause of true art in this country is in a poor way indeed. Holbrooke also comments upon other trials that the poor composer has to suffer:—

"I might say that it is hardly conducive for the composer ever to write for the full orchestra. Take the case, let us say, of a choral work. The vocal score is always published, of course—and generally with profit to the composer and to the publisher. The full score of the work is invariably kept in manuscript and *given* to the publisher without any extra fee whatever. No one ever hears of a royalty for this part of his art, or even of a share of the performing fees which are charged by publishers. Again, if the score is printed, still no 'equivalent' comes to the composer."

Holbrooke, too, criticises the mania of conductors for producing novelties which, when once produced, are never performed again. Of what use is this to the composer, he asks! No publisher will look at a work unless, at least, a second and third hearing of the work can be guaranteed. Among other modern abuses, he also cites that of "competition," in which the time of so many composers is wasted in producing work that is valueless to them afterwards from a commercial point of view. He illustrates this by referring to the Norwich Com-

petition, won by Julius Harrison, which he truly says "has placed some *fifty composers with useless settings of 'Cleopatra'!*"

In an article on "Deadheads" he has severely criticised those people who sponge upon artists and expect "free tickets" for all kinds of musical functions. It is the people in good circumstances, too, whom he asserts to be the worst culprits in this respect, "for poorer people I have never found lower themselves to this extent, the extent of asking for free tickets, when they perchance had a merry rent-roll of many hundreds a year."

He continues in the following strain:

"Poor souls! they cannot in the disgusting meanness of their hearts ever pay. No; the artists must try to creep along on crutches and support this selfishness. They nearly all do; and the result is an appalling assembly of artists, each and all earning barely sufficient to keep body and soul together. Indeed, the time is not far distant when I myself had no pence for a meal, cheap as food is; yet I was, on the very first venture in concert giving, confronted and waylaid by my 'best friends' for free seats thuswise: I'm so fond of your beautiful music. We *so* much want to come to your concert! You *must* send us tickets. Now, don't forget! Of course, I forgot!"

With regard to the abuses attaching to musical criticism, he says: "The general tenor of the critic's outlook and desire is to propitiate the powers that be, and thereby to keep his job against all competitors! This will explain his canny

ejaculations concerning those big-wigged music men who may have influence for bad or good, and also his trenchant criticism of the smaller ones who he thinks are unable to return his attacks, but whom he might benefit by his help." Again, "One of our composers told me he could get what he liked in a certain daily paper because one of the critics had been a fellow student with him in Germany."

In Holbrooke's opinion, one of the great abuses of musical life is the rivalry that exists among artists. He considers that in no other profession is it so keen and vindictive. "I try to imagine Herrick and Byron in the same room! Nearly as dangerous an experiment as two tenors or two sopranos closeted together. I am convinced *nothing* would come out of the said room after fifteen minutes, but feathers, so great would the *entente* be! Let brotherly love continue for ever. Can anyone outside the musical world imagine how vindictive, how wicked, how 'intense' the artistic 'love-feeling' is, when it comes to rivalry They would not credit it, and perhaps it is as well they do not know these things. My experiences, however, put me in the unfortunate plight of knowing only too well this fearful 'trait' in so-called artists. There are not many English musicians to whom the name of Holbrooke is not anathema! especially the older school! As Henry Coward is reported to have said, 'I have many enemies and many friends, and I love them both! *Enemies are essential to progress!*' Dreadful as it sounds, it is true."

Holbrooke's series of articles, entitled "Weird Opinions," that appeared in the pages of "Musical Opinion," are written in "dialogue" form, and are intended to demonstrate the narrow-mindedness and occasional crass ignorance that distinguish so many different sections of musical life. We are introduced to the opinons of publishers, organists, German and English conductors, French and English composers, critics, singers, musical enthusiasts, and so on, concerning music as it affects them personally. These people never see beyond their own horizon, and the dialogues in which they are made to indulge are written with a good deal of humour, and with a cynical comprehension of the evils that lie at the root of their ignorance. Holbrooke has, in this instance, used a *nom-de-plume,* and, protected by this, has often poked sly fun at the opinions prevalent among certain classes concerning his own work.

In these "Weird Opinions" the publishers discuss the subject of the publication of music of high aim. The public won't look at it, so why purchase it, they say! "What do you find goes nowadays?" one publisher asks; "nigger tunes or piano pieces?" "Nigger tunes every time!" is the other publisher's reply. "We sold five thousand to Australia last week of our budget of 'Black v. White' Dance Album. I think that the title we had before was hardly as good. It was, you remember, 'The New Country' Quadrilles. There's money in our dance albums I can tell you. Minim and Co. were only telling me the other day

in Oxford Street that their firm's chief revenue came from the arrangements of those lovely comedy operas from the theatre."

The cathedral organists discuss musical festivals run by themselves and the absurdity of composers expecting fees for conducting their own works. "I don't know what is coming over the composers lately. They all say that they are poor and want payment, but I should think that they would be much better advised if they were not so keen on their payment, They would hear their works performed, and would in all probability be invited to the mayor's luncheon, which would do them no end of good." The same organists also express their dislike for modern music on account of the extra work that it entails in preparation for performance, whilst one of them has something to say concerning Holbrooke's own work, "When Holbrooke asked for eighteen concertinas for his 'Bells' poem, I hired some harmoniums and that satisfied him; for, of course, no one plays the concertina nowadays." The following "opinion" is also amusing: "I remember that Thomas Beecham had great trouble finding a bass oboe for Delius, and at last they found a property instrument for him, used by a juggler or some such fellow on the stage, you know, but which emitted no sound! Of course, the composer did not know whether the instrument was playing or not, so it passed off; and I later heard that some of the critics said that the instrument had *a quaint and soft tone!* These poor critics are really the limit."

Two conductors conversing say :

"I get all my best effects out of the brass, as you know. The percussion is, of course, most important : but except isolated instances (take, for instance, the 'Heldenleben' poem by Strauss, with its fine percussion effects), I can never get any effect for the conductor. And this, to me, seems absurd. How can we do these heavy works if we have no chance of applause for ourselves ?"

"It is useless to laugh at it. Applause is, as you say, the life and soul of conducting : without it we may as well become composers."

Again, "We had a huge 'poem' by one of our young composers in which about twenty extra men were required; it was a most elaborate piece of writing. I rehearsed this work in twenty-five minutes, and it takes forty-five minutes in performance ! How's that ?"

Two critics also give voice to their grievances, and speak of the lack of sympathy that they receive from composers whether they praise or condemn them. One speaks of "that ghastly poem *Ulalume,*" and also says "Conductors now are so full of conceit that they wish to give some stupendous reading of a well-known work which will outplace Nikisch or Safonoff. What we all want is *regular* performances of the serious works by Delius, Walford Davies, Bantock or Scott, so that the critics may be able to write something confidently about them."

A male flatterer speaking to a lady singer says that he hopes she makes the publishers pay for sing-

ing their ballads. "Oh, we make them pay where we can," she says, "they are not really bad people to deal with if you do what they want and if you sing their songs. It really is to our advantage to meet them; for we certainly get all our engagements through singing those beautiful ballads I sang last night. That one called 'Jonah' with the refrain is, to me, beyond praise."

"By Jove, you are right; it brought down the house. And you had eight recalls, did you not?"

"No; nine, I think."

In a dialogue between two musical enthusiasts after a Hallé concert in Manchester, Richter comes in for a good deal of criticism for conducting so little modern music, whilst Beecham is commended for doing what Richter has neglected to do.

Two recital organists, in conference, speak of the "frantic" pieces of Reger and the interference of their vicars in matters musical, whilst they also pride themselves on the publication of several anthems and organ pieces, all of which, however, have been presented to the publishers without a fee.

A German conductor and a German composer discuss the chances of success for a German musician in England, and decide that he would do well there, even if he were a failure in Germany.

*German Composer:* Yes, perhaps we do not belong to the front rank; but that fact will not matter in England!

*German Conductor:* No, we are safe there. We can give our works, and I think we may expect

much praise from their so-called critics. It is the press which is so kind to us in England. I am delighted with it.

Later, the conductor says "Nearly all of us do well in music because we have our great masters behind us. It is true that we have nearly starved all of them, but we have the credit of their great works. This is of very great use to us when we travel, as you know; besides, there is nothing that the English people like so much as 'flummery.' A foreign musician is their delight, you will see, my boy."

Of the lack of the artistic feeling in the Scotch, the conductor also has his opinion. "Do you not know that there is nothing that the Scotch dislike more than art; but they do not wish to betray themselves in the remotest degree as barbarians, so they fuse up a fictitious and flimsy interest, often interlarded with their whisky toddy, and they pose as small art patrons. They have never yet been able to stand up as a fosterer of their men of genius—in music. It is true that of composers they are destitute, when it comes to genius; but there is a good heavy and pedestrian traffic done in music by various Scots here and there."

In another of these "Weird Opinions" a Frenchman has to acknowledge to an English composer, "It is impossible for the finest orchestral players to understand the works that they play in manuscript when a hurried rehearsal is given, and when the conductor himself is not certain of his score. It is a tragedy for composers; and I do not

see where they can improve even in their mere *technique* if they are to be heard so scantily."

Later "Opinions" deal with competitions and their abuses. In one of these, a "philanthropist" is made to say, "The elaboration is necessary in modern art. You surely cannot wish for the same things to be said every succeeding century? The same harmonic basis and the same dull melody?"

Two composers, speaking together, bemoan the welcome given to the foreigner to the detriment of the English composer, for, as one of them says, "I have never seen or heard any English music abroad unless it was performed by its composers! I can recollect one or two efforts made on Delius's behalf, also on Elgar's; but it did not grow. It died away because the work by their own men touches them more acutely, as indeed it should. It will need to be very extraordinary and fine before the continental audiences will listen to any music in preference to that of their own Richard Strauss and Max Reger."

I take my last extract from a dialogue between two English publishers.

"You find the German engrossed in his Strauss, the Frenchman in his Debussy, the Russian in his Tschaikowsky, and so on; but I have never yet found such a feeling existing here, except for the solitary hero, like Elgar for instance. After all, there are more than a few fine writers, and it is time that we heard a little more of them."

In accordance with which I agree and proceed with my task.

# CHAPTER III

## EARLY COMPOSITIONS FOR VIOLIN, CLARINET, MANDOLINE, VIOLONCELLO WITH PIANOFORTE

| | |
|---|---|
| Op. 3 | Six Pieces (Violin). |
| Op. 5 | Two Poems (Violin). |
| Op. 6 | (a) Sonata (Violin). |
| Op. 8 | (5) Valse Characteristique (Violin). |
| Op. 12 | Nine Pieces (Violin). |
| Op. 23 | (Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6) Six Pieces (Violin). |
| Op. 6 | (b) Adagio and Rondo (Clarinet). |
| Op. 8 | (Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4) Four Pieces (Mandoline). |
| Op. 19 | Fantasie Sonata (Violoncello). |

HOLBROOKE'S works for the above combinations, like many for the piano alone, were chiefly written to earn bread and butter. Therefore, in spite of a persuasive charm that distinguishes many of them, they cannot generally be ranked with his later productions.

The *Six Petits morceaux* of Op. 3 for violin and piano, dedicated to Granville Bantock, all belong to the composer's earliest days. Some are pleasingly wistful, others are dainty and merry in

tune, but they work no deeper emotional vein. In all these pieces, moreover, the piano plays quite a subordinate part to the melody uttered by the violin, though there are a few primitive attempts, here and there, to lend it interest. Generally, however, the piano part is little more than an accompaniment to the string part.

In the *Two Poems* for violin and piano of Opus 5, there is a much more intimate interweaving of the two parts. The melodies are less trivial, and, if not great, are at least sincere. There is something of real poetic charm about *Une Légende*, the basis for whose inspiration is to be found in Eric Mackay's well-known lines.

> "The forest flowers are faded, all
> The winds complain, the snowflakes fall,
> Eleanore!
> I turn to thee as to a bower,
> Thou breathest beauty like a flower,
> Thou smilest like a happy hour,
> Eleanore!"

This piece opens with four bars of an impressive and imposing nature for the piano alone, and then the violin begins to sigh out a beautiful and dolorous air *lento expressivo molto*.

*Une Ballade*, if not quite so interesting as the last poem, is of very considerable merit. To it is appended the following lines from the same poet whose verses inspired *Une Légende:*

"There is a grammar of the lips and eyes,
And I have learnt it. There are tokens sure
Of trust and love, and I have found them pure.
Is love the guerdon then? is love the prize?
It is! It is! We find it in the skies,
And here on earth 'tis all that will endure."

This piece is written in "D" in six-four time, and considerable independence is given to the piano part, which, on the whole, is better conceived than the violin part.

The Sonatina (Op. 6a), dedicated to Fritz Kreisler, is one of the bigger works that Holbrooke has written for the violin. It is in four movements, and is in the strict classic form. It is a bright and pleasant composition, despite its rather commonplace themes. It touches no emotional depths, but skates pleasantly over the surface of things. The first movement—*Allegro*—opens vigorously in A minor with a well-defined rhythm of an optimistic cast, and is followed by an expressive *dolce* air starting off in D major, which is really the first subject of the movement, the preceding bars being more of an introductory nature. A bridge passage of five bars for the piano alone then leads into the first section of the second subject in D minor, in which the piano part has the greater interest. This merges into the second section of the second subject—a broadly-phrased melody in C, of a rather obvious cast. The development portion of the movement is short, and the recapitulation follows a fairly normal course.

The *Nocturne—adagio e molto expressivo*—

though melodious, is not so well imagined as the first movement. It is of too facile a pattern to be of much significance, though it has many winsome passages.

The *Scherzo* is delightful, and is, in many respects, the best portion of the Sonata. It is in three-four time in the key of D minor.

The last movement—*Rondo*—has a bright and buoyant theme of a similar type to those themes with which the pages of French light opera have made us familiar. There is a *fête champêtre* air about this.

Although this sonata has no really serious thoughts or depths of emotion, it is uniformly genial and happy. Its chief weakness lies in the lack of homogeneity of the different movements and in the consequent scrappiness of effect, and also in a certain poverty of thematic material and of thematic development. Yet, despite these disqualifications, it shows many signs of budding strength.

The "Valse Characteristique" (Op. 8) is commonplace, whilst, amongst the numbers of Op. 12, *Moorish Dance* is bright and vivacious, and *Alla Napolitana* is a dance-measure in six-eight time which obtains a fair mead of character from the downward droop of each section of its first theme, to which the piano lends a few simple and effective touches. It is a good concert-piece of light nature. *Valse-Sérénade* is a graceful, suave number of simple charm with the main melody well apportioned between the two instruments. A dotted-

crochet figure is a prominent feature of this piece. The *Caprice* is very brilliant, and quite the best number of the set. It starts off with a bustling pragmatical passage for the violin over a simple "vamping" accompaniment in the piano-part. This is followed by a vigorous, march-like air, which makes its first appearance as a solo for the piano.

The *Serenade Orientale* of Op. 23 is one of the most original of Holbrooke's compositions for the violin and piano. Six bars for the latter instrument alone precede the entry of the subject for the string instrument. In this, syncopation plays a prominent part, and the bare piano accompaniment lends much effect to the general atmosphere.

*Humoresque* is jaunty and lively, but, in spite of some effectively combined themes for the two instruments, does not rise to a very high level. *Remembrance* has good moments, and is generally graceful in the turn of its phrases, but its leading melody is slightly desultory and monotonous. *Souvenir de printemps* is much more interesting, and it has proved one of the most popular of all Holbrooke's violin works, and has also been arranged for pianoforte solo, organ solo, and for small orchestra. Popularity, alone, does not count for much, however; it often covers a multitude of sins. Nevertheless, in this case it has fairly well justified itself. The piece, though a mere fragment, is of a simple, appealing nature, replete with fragrant charm.

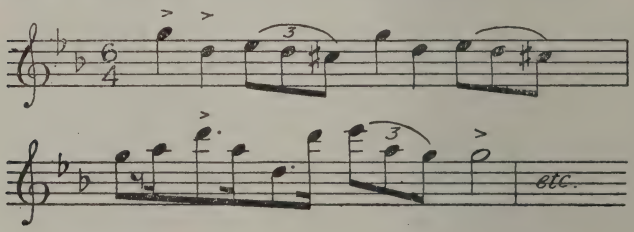
The *Adagio and Rondo* (Op. 6b) for clarinet and piano is a very early work, though it only made its

appearance in print a few years ago. On the face of it, it is patent that it was written at a time of life when ideas had not begun to pour very generously into the composer's musical exchequer. It harks back to the past for its sentiment and for its *cadre*, and borrows something of the Handelian spirit to work upon.

Among Holbrooke's other small published works are four short pieces for mandoline, guitars and piano. Three of them—*Bon Jour, Entr'acte* and *Sérénade Arabienne*—are in light-hearted mood, whilst *Nocturne* is more plaintive in its sentiment, but none are particularly distinctive.

Though *Souvenir* (*Op.* 23 *No.* 3) and *Novelette* (*Op.* 42 *No.* 10) have been arranged for 'cello and piano, Holbrooke has only written one original work for this combination.

This is the *Fantasie Sonate* (Op. 19), a work of considerable melodic attractiveness based on classic models. Its different movements flow into one another without any cessation of the musical current throughout, and its moods, though simple, are always powerfully and pleasantly expressed. It opens *molto allegro fuoco* in the key of G minor with a bold theme for the piano in six-four time.



The second subject is in B flat major, and is of a smooth and flowing character. Later, we have a *poco adagio expressivo* in twelve eight time, in which there is a happy blending of thematic matter. A very pleasing and bustling little theme also asserts itself in the last portion of the work. This is full of infectious animation, although interrupted for a time by a *poco meno mosso* section by way of contrast.

The work terminates with some *bravura* passages in the key in which it began. The piano writing of this Sonata is particularly fine, and is full of independent interest.

These early compositions for violin, clarinet, mandoline and violoncello with piano, however, cannot be taken as representative of the composer in any way. They are just offshoots from the parent stock in the same way that the tender sprouts that spring to life beneath a giant oak owe their origin to its branching roots; but the value of the tree is judged, not by the saplings that it creates in its exuberance, but by the stateliness of its own towering strength.

## CHAPTER IV

### VOCAL WORKS

| | |
|---|---|
| Op. 7 | Six Songs. |
| Op. 11 | Five Songs. |
| Op. 13 | Seven Songs. |
| Op. 14 | Five Bohemian Songs. |
| Op. 15 | Five Songs. |
| Op. 22 | Six Characteristic Songs. |
| Op. 24 | Six Lyrical Songs. |
| Op. 29 | Six Modern Songs. |
| Op. 30 | Six Romantic Songs. |
| Op. 34 | Six Landscapes. |
| Op. 41 | (a) Marino Faliero. |
| | (b) Annabel Lee. |
| Op. 54 | Five Songs. |
| Op. 1 | Four Anthems. |
| Op. 9 | Six part-songs, madrigals and glees. |
| Op. 16 | Two Part-Songs. |
| Op. 47 | Eight part-songs and "Battle-Psalm." |

HOLBROOKE'S songs show greater contrasts than are to be observed in any of the other divisions of his work. They range from the most puerile to the most lofty emotion. Many of them appear to have been produced by the composer for his daily bread, and to have been just mechanically jotted down as part of a day's routine. Verses always

suggested melody to his mind, and he has not always paused to determine whether that melody was significant or not. It might be sufficiently so to attract the popular taste, which has always had an open-armed welcome for perfunctory art of all kinds, and this was often all that Holbrooke required. By reason of necessity, his art has frequently been compelled to degenerate into a money-making business. He has had to write music in the same manner and for the same cause that a tailor settles down to turn out a suit of clothes. In this process it is his songs that have chiefly played the part of scapegoat. Feeble words have been elected for musical treatment, and these have been combined with music of the conventional "ballad" pattern to suit the depraved tastes of the average vocalist of the present day. There was no necessity for him to probe in search of any depths underlying many of the verses to which he wrote music. Like Dickens' Mrs. Harris, they were non-existent. Therefore he did not attempt it. The leading note of these verses lay in the superficiality of their sentiment, and Holbrooke's music mated itself to them in a like superficial, even if pleasant manner. There was a community of "idea" between them even if there was no community of "soul." They enabled the composer to proceed with his greater work, and, in this fact, many of them receive their chief justification.

The composer himself recognises the small artistic merit of many of these songs, for he has said "that the poets approached him rather than

he them." In some cases, however, he has chosen well known lines and tried to mould them into a musical pattern of a popular type, to the serious detriment of the inner significance of the poet's fancy. On the other hand, in later days, he has been stirred to great achievements when he has written individually for art's sake only. There are some poems in whose imaginative details and emotions he has thoroughly steeped himself, and where he has gauged the feelings that gave them birth with a sort of telepathic instinct. He has played a part after the same manner that a great actor may impersonate a character on the stage, and with a similar capacity for psychological penetration.

However insignificant some of the lesser songs are, though, they always have refinement of thought and melodiousness of phrase, whilst *all* are vocal. These things come naturally to the composer in his settings for a solo voice. Like the piano pieces, the songs are all modern in feeling, and Holbrooke has been little attracted by the verses of the older poets. It is true that we have a few settings of the lyrics of Kingsley, Longfellow, Hood, Tennyson, Byron, Burns, Keats and Poe, but the large majority of the songs have been generated by poetry of quite modern and second-rate quality.

In all his earlier songs Holbrooke has made the melody of the vocal air of far greater importance than the piano part. The latter has been framed to suit the capabilities of the least ambitious players, and rarely rises above the nature of mere accom-

paniment. It lends the vocal melody an harmonic basis, but rarely a contrapuntal contrast. There is no intimate interweaving of vocal and instrumental themes to produce that unity of total effect that we encounter in the master songs of Schumann, Brahms and Wolf, for instance. In the composer's later songs we find a better state of things, and the piano is made to play a more important rôle in the general scheme instead of being a mere clothes-line to hang shreds of melody upon. In many cases, such as in some of the *Landscapes* and *Romantic Songs*, and in the pianoforte versions of *Annabel Lee* and *Marino Faliero*, the instrumental part lends a most illuminating aid to the atmospheric suggestions of the various poems. These things were written when the position of the composer was becoming more assured, and, in them, he followed the instincts of his own nature. They show, too, how greatly his strength as a song-writer was increasing.

One point worthy of notice in Holbrooke's greater songs is the fact that he never indulges in the meaningless architectural piling up of piano themes that mar so much modern vocal art. His piano parts always suggest some definite picture without being redundant. They have a logical *raison d'être* which the work of many contemporary composers often lacks. Holbrooke never indulges in fine writing for the purpose of evidencing his technical cleverness. He has plenty of the latter quality, but it is regulated by a discretion that uses it only in the right places.

His songs are lyrical by nature rather than rhapsodical, and he generally thinks in straight paths of melodic continuity. In his earlier work, at any rate, the rhythmic pattern is of the simplest regularity. It travels in one direction without encountering any by-roads or cross-roads of rhythmic phrase to divert it from its onward course. The very openings of many of these songs indicate to us at once the lines that they are destined to pursue.

All the numbers of Opus 7 belong to Holbrooke's student days, and, of these, *Fair Phyllis* is, in many respects, the best as being somewhat less conventional than the later ones. It also shows a concordance between vocal and verbal accents which the composer often disregarded in his early songs. His later work rarely shows this defect, and the musical and verbal punctuations are generally made to synchronise in a logical and inevitable manner. *A Love Symphony* also shows promise.

The songs of Opus 11 follow along much the same lines as those of Opus 7. *Summer Sweet,* however, shows an added sense of originality.

The second number of Opus 13, *We are Violets Blue,* is grateful, as being free from the sham sentiment in which the modern "ballad" writer delights. The words, by Leigh Hunt, are fresh and fanciful, and the dainty, tripping music has happily caught their spirit, so that there is something of the charm of a Macdowell "nature-sketch" about it. *Love's Answer* also shows many signs of strength. It has an emotional force that is

lacking in the earlier songs mentioned—something more vital—something more tense and compelling, indicating what possibilities lay in the composer as a writer of vocal music. The best song of the group, however, is, undoubtedly, *I Came at Morn.* Each differing shade of the words of this number is faithfully reflected in the music, which is full of a limpid, delicate beauty, whilst the piano-part of softly shimmering chords is suffused with magical suggestions.

The *Five Bohemian Songs* (*Op.* 14), with orchestral accompaniment, were first sung by Andrew Black at the Norwich Festival of 1905. As their name implies, they deal less with sentiment than with action, and their spirit is much more exhilarating than the erotic vapourings of some of the earlier songs. They possess far more originality too, and are, at the same time, direct and bold in rhythm and free from technical complexities. The first number, *Unto this Foe*, a drinking song, in which the warrior pledges his foe that he may meet him often in battle, is bold and vigorous. *Liberty*, on the other hand, is rather tedious. *Ere your Beauty* is the most ambitious number of the set, a love song of unhackneyed nature, containing much beauty of expression, but just lacking a breath of tenderness that is necessary to vitalise it. *The Story of a Drum* tells the tragic little history of a drummer in music that is full of stirring movement, and of happy, little, illustrative touches, whilst the last number, *A Free Lance*, is the song of a careless debonair fellow who takes a particularly

optimistic view of life, and the music, though conventional and of no great strength, catches its spirit well.

Though these songs, in no way, rank with Holbrooke's best work in this branch of his art, their character is vastly superior to that of the pumped-up sentiment of many of the earlier songs. They may not have the foundations upon which *great* art is based, but, at least, they strike one as being true to certain phases of life, and as being better meditated by the composer than much of the work that preceded them.

Most of the songs of Opus 15 are much less veracious in their expression, though the setting of Longfellow's translation of Heine's exquisite lyric, *The Sea Hath Its Pearls,* is quite good.

In *A Winter Night,* too, we have a fine, vigorous song for baritone or bass. Holbrooke has always been successful in inventing themes of an energetic, boisterous nature, and here we have one of great excellence.

The *Six Characteristic Songs* of Opus 22 follow on somewhat similar lines to the *Bohemian Songs,* but are not quite so spontaneous.

Of the six songs of Opus 24, *Tho' all the Stars* is decidedly the best. A vein of romantic feeling pervades it, and the harmonic plan is delicate and full of sensibility. Moreover, it has a touch of tenderness that the songs of Holbrooke often lack.

The *Six Modern Songs* of Opus 29 are, however, on a much higher plane, and aim at a more dramatic mode of expression.

Particularly fine is *The Requital,* which takes high rank among Holbrooke's songs. It is a little gem of exquisite fancy and of real musicianly feeling. One or two of these poems of Herbert Trench, however, by no means suggest music, and would have been better left untouched.

*The Romantic Songs* of Opus 30, taken collectively, are the best set of songs that have come under notice up to this point. The words have been selected with better judgment, and there has been an honest endeavour to express them thoughtfully and veraciously in the music. The cause of art has been the guiding impulse in writing them, and not the regard for public taste. The third, *Come Not When I am Dead,* is the most dramatic number of the collection, and the most beautiful, too. It is one of those big songs that belong only to the highest things of art, in which no touch of exaggeration finds a trace. The full chords in the upper part of the piano accompaniment are like moans of sorrow, and these, combined with the solemn dotted figure in the bass, build up an effect that is intensely moving. The change of mood at the lines:

> "There let the wind sleep and the plover cry;
> But thou go by"

is magnificently caught by the music, and comes with a fine sense of climax. It is a terrible song in its hopeless despair, and it is also one of the most poignant bits of intense emotionalism that vocal art can show. *A Farewell* ranks second in merit only

to *Come Not When I Am Dead*. It is a setting of Tennyson's well-known lines, "Flow down cold rivulet to the sea," and both the melody and the accompaniment cleverly illustrate the wayward rippling and gurgling of the water.

The Six Landscapes of Opus 34 also rank high among the composer's work. The origin of this title may be best given in his own words.

"Artists always hung by the old names in painting until Whistler came along and introduced 'symphonies,' 'nocturnes,' and so on. Then, as everyone knows, there was a fearful outcry. The painter's art was scandalised, and it has barely recovered from the shock now. For my own part, that sort of title to a picture enraptures me. It affected me so much that I wanted to know why we should not have 'landscapes' in music. Having wanted to know that, I proceeded to do it myself. I published a volume of musical landscapes—remember this has a distinct bearing on the expression of modern ideas—and I got in return the usual amount of stereotyped abuse because of the impossibility of anybody thinking that there could be such a thing as landscape in music. To me the idea was natural enough. These 'landscapes' were the settings of certain poems by Miss Althea Gyles which she called 'sketches.' I was greatly taken with those poems, and the tone pictures they called up in my mind suggested the title of 'landscapes.' When I mentioned my intention of setting those poems to Miss Gyles, and the title I had decided on, she said to me, 'You will be

laughed at for your pains.' To that I replied, 'That will not be a new experience for me.' Then I added, 'There is nothing more natural than to call them "landscapes," for they are pictures of the horizon finely shaded in words; and the feeling they called up to me lent itself to musical expression.' I did not see why the effect of those poems could not be intensified by music. This is a statement which I know will always be challenged for the reason that most poets believe no musician can intensify their work."

These Landscapes were written as a sort of compliment to Debussy, the composer who has done so much, by means of exquisite tonal colourings, to realise for us many varied aspects of nature's face. Holbrooke's music, then, shows traces of the influence that the impressionism of the French composer has had on his mind, though Debussy's harmonic system is not very prominent, and it is Holbrooke's own individuality that we feel most.

The two great songs of Opus 41—*Marino Faliero* and *Annabel Lee*—show how remarkably the emotional horizons of the composer had widened. None of the songs previous to the date of these two had displayed such remarkable psychological insight, pictorial power or emotional intensity. The composer had chiefly dabbled among rather weak verses, or among poetical ideas of small significance, and written music to fit in *tant bien que mal* with their tendencies. Now, he got hold of subjects full of dramatic grip that called up vivid pictures before his mind. He envisaged these and visualised them

in his music, so that that music became a perfect counterpart of the subjects to which it was allied. *Marino Faliero,* for baritone or bass voice and orchestra, was first performed at the Bristol Musical Festival of 1905, the vocalist on this occasion being Andrew Black. The verse is taken from Byron's tragedy of that name, and the scena is scored for orchestra.

In this striking, dramatic work, Holbrooke has realised the character of the old Doge cleverly. It is not as a decrepit, worn-out man that he depicts him, but as a man full of fiery passions, such as Bertuccio, one of the conspirators, describes him.

> "One who has done great deeds and seen great changes;
> No Tyrant, though bred in tyranny;
> Valiant in war, and sage in council, noble
> In nature, although haughty; quick, yet wary:
> Yet for all this, so full of certain passions,
> That if once stirred and baffled, as he has been
> Upon the tenderest points, there is no Fury
> In Grecian story like to that which wrings
> His vitals with her burning hands, till he
> Grows capable of all things for revenge."

The music is vivid and vital, and rises eloquently to the heights of the subject to which it is allied. Yet, in spite of this, and of the fact of its performance at the Bristol Festival, no publisher could be found who would be willing to undertake the risk of its publication, so that the composer was compelled to issue it himself!

The other number of Opus 41—*Annabel Lee*—is of entirely different character. The poem is by Edgar Allan Poe, the poet who has had so strong an influence upon the work of the composer generally. It is romantic rather than rhetorical, and tells of the love of the poet for the maiden, Annabel, who lives in "A kingdom by the sea"—a love which he describes as "a love that the wingèd seraphs of heaven coveted her and me." But death claims the maiden, and she is borne away to "a sepulcre there by the sea." Her soul, however, is always with that of her lover, and, therefore, he does not despond, for, as he says:

"For the moon never beams without bringing me dreams
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
Of my darling—my darling—my life and my bride,
In the sepulcre there by the sea,
In her tomb by the sounding sea."

The strange spirit and phraseology of this poem has been most wonderfully caught by the composer. His fine gift of being able to spread a poetic atmosphere through the whole fabric of his music has never been more fully realised than here. Being of absolute originality, the song is apt to puzzle those who hear it for the first time. It is a supreme achievement, however, and Holbrooke has

projected his ideas in strange, beautiful music that is half weird and half solemn, but that is always permeated with the true spirit of romance. The song is written for a baritone voice with orchestra, and in this orchestra no flutes, trumpets, or trombones are employed, though there are parts for cor-anglais, bass-clarinet, harps and double bassoon.

We have now come to the last set of Holbrooke's published songs—those of Opus 54. The first of these, *An Outsong,* is disappointing. In *Killary* we see the reverse side, for it has much of the atmospheric sense about it that made Annabel Lee so fine a piece of work, though it is built on a less important scale. Its melody is of great originality, and the last verse attains a high degree of eloquent and moving pathos. The enunciation of the final word of the song on a note belonging to the harmony of the tonic seventh is decidedly effective. Of the other songs of the set, *Where Be You Going* has much charm and *Think Not Of It* catches the simple nature of Keats' poem with a good deal of success.

Of the miscellaneous vocal works, the *Anthems* of Opus 1 call for no particular mention, whilst of the glees, madrigals, and part-songs, making up the various numbers of Op, 9, *Gentle Spring,* a trio for female voices, produced at the Blackpool Festival in 1906, is the best. *Sunrise* and *The Wanderers* of Opus 16, for women's voices, are both good. The numbers of Opus 47 are all part-songs, with one exception, and are generally interesting. There is fine musicianly work, for

instance, in the setting of Longfellow's poem *Footsteps of Angels* for the more usual four-part combination, which was written for the Blackpool Festival of 1907. It commences in seven-four time, and then passes to four-four time, and afterwards alternates between three-four and four-four rhythm for the succeeding twenty bars, without, however, the impulse of the music being disturbed or any scrappiness of effect being produced. The close of the work comes in impressive manner. *To Zante* is also splendid, whilst *Jean Richepin's Song, Captain Wattle* and *Drink the Swizzy* are all distinguished by marked originality. *England's Battle Psalm* is of a different character, being written for a solo voice with a chorus of ten bass voices. It is scored for orchestra, and is rugged and forcible in its cast, though it does not succeed in attaining any high rank among the composer's work.

Altogether, Holbrooke's part-songs are a valuable addition to a branch of musical art that has generally been regarded as typically English.

# CHAPTER V

## PIANOFORTE AND ORGAN WORKS

Op. 2 (a) Twelve Pieces.
Op. 4 Ten Pieces.
Op. 10 Nine Pieces.
Op. 17 (a) 1—7 Seven Pieces.
Op. 18 Two Piano Suites.
Op. 42 Ten Rhapsodies Etudes.
Op. 59 (c) Four Futurist Dances.

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Op. 64 Prelude and Fugue.

GEORGE MEREDITH once styled the piano the "constitutional bourgeois" among musical instruments, rating it as greatly inferior to either an organ or an orchestra. This may certainly be the case, yet it is by means of the humble piano that music is most generally brought into the homes of the people. Modern composers, however, have not nearly the same high regard for it as had the musical Titans of the beginning and middle of last century. Instead they prefer to embody most of their best thinking in orchestral works of large calibre, and to employ the piano only as a medium for their less important and less profound ideas.

British composers, in particular, have been

neglectful of the piano as a musical interpreter, though a few writers, such as Holbrooke, Scott, Ireland, Frank Bridge, Arnold Bax, Coleridge Taylor, Benjamin Dale, William Baines, and a few others, have done important works for it. We do not feel, however, that our modern composers generally have upheld the dignity of the piano as a means of musical expression in England to nearly the same extent that Scriabin did in Russia, Albeniz in Spain, and Debussy in France. Pianoforte composition is rather a laggard in this country.

It was only to be expected that Holbrooke, as an exceptionally fine pianist, should turn his attention to pianoforte writing. The large majority of his piano works belong to the rank of *salon* pieces. They are melodious, if rather eclectic by nature, and even the least noteworthy have points that prevent them from being regarded as quite perfunctory affairs.

Of the many early works written by Holbrooke (mostly to keep the wolf from the door), the "*Valse Caprice*" on "Three Blind Mice," for instance, with its four variations, is decidedly entertaining, and acts as a forerunner to the important orchestral work that was to come later; *Arlequinade,* in its class, is excellent, and is founded on large melodic leaps, such as the composer often favoured in some of his early work, and these give the piece a freakish character that is particularly fascinating. *Valse Alsacienne* was written for the higher local examination of Trinity College of Music, and is especially dainty and graceful.

The best piece of *Opus* 17 is *Clair de lune,* which has real melodic beauty combined with an atmospheric suggestiveness and a delicacy of treatment that is very appealing. *Barcarolle,* too, has a haunting air that makes it a very delectable little composition.

The two Suites of Op. 18 stand out conspicuously among the early works. The first, *Kleine Suite,* borrows something from German art, and the last two numbers, *Zuneigung* and *Werzwuflung,* show a sobriety of expression such as we have not encountered in the piano work up to this point. *Scherzo humoristique* and *Wunderlicher Einfall,* however, exemplify the composer's lighter side, and the first is singularly fascinating. *The Grande Suite Moderne* is completely Holbrookean. The first number, *Scherzo Humoresque,* is full of a perky, jovial *joie de vivre,* and, though the themes themselves are of no great distinction, the harmonic scheme redeems the melodic tenuity. The second piece, *Valse Romanesque,* on the other hand, is compounded of exquisitely delicate melodic beauties and sensitively conceived harmonies, and forms a complete contrast to the *Scherzo.* In *Nocturne* (*Night by the Sea*) the composer turned towards impressionism as a mode of expression, and with fair success. The last number, "*L'Orgie*" (*Fantasie Bacchanale*), still remains one of the composer's most striking pieces, pulsating with wildly exuberant revelry.

Holbrooke's most important contributions to piano music (apart from the *Concerto*) are to be

found in his *Rhapsodie Études* (Op. 42), where he has indulged his own artistic tastes without keeping his hand too rigidly on the public pulse. These are ten in number, and contain some of the best and most difficult pianistic writing that modern British music has to show. The first, *Caprice Brilliant,* is simple in harmonic construction, but distinguished by a sportive debonair spirit that is very attractive; *Poursuivant* opens with a passionate subject that has something of the depth and earnestness of Brahms. *Énergique* well defines its title. *La Fantastique* is a favourite of the composer and is often played by him in public. It is one of the lightest and airiest of compositions imaginable, and of a quality that is most alluring. Very charming, too, is *Une nuit ténébreuse,* with its gossamer-like fancies, delicately woven into a delightful harmonic fabric. *Nocturne la Soir,* on the other hand, hardly attains the level reached by the other numbers of the group. *Toccata* is dedicated to Mark Hambourg, who often plays it. It is an extraordinary piece, founded on two notes throughout, which, whilst lending unity to the work, have also produced fine contrasts of feeling. Sprightliness and good humour distinguish *Fantoches. Valse Fantasie* is brilliant, and for a virtuoso only! The last number of the set, *Novellette,* is exquisite. It is founded on a heaven-born air presented in two different ways. Some eloquent bits of imitation are introduced, and the total effect is one of magical beauty.

Holbrooke's last published work for the piano is

a set of *Four Futurist Dances* (*Op.* 59)—*Leprechaun Dance, Demon's Dance, Troglodyte Dance* and *Trollops Dance*—and here the composer indulges in wild extravagances of harmony such as the works of Schönberg and Eric Satic and the later works of Scriabin have made us familiar with. We find a free employment of the duodecuple scale and of the whole-tone scale with derivative chords built up from a conglomeration of dissonant intervals. There are also lavish successions of seconds, sevenths and ninths, whilst each piece ends with a discord resolving by evaporation. Melody has gone whilst the harmonic "atmosphere" is too thick to see through. One would welcome any gleam of happy sunlight. At all events, these cacophonic dances stand apart from the composer's other work, and were probably framed in sarcastic vein. As imitations of some modern tendencies they are undoubtedly clever *tours de force*, but if such music is ever destined to become the "music of the future" it is to be hoped that composers of our own age will not anticipate too often.

Besides the works already mentioned, most of Holbrooke's leading works have been arranged either for pianoforte solo or pianoforte duet.

### *Works for Organ.*

Although a few pieces, such as *Nocturne* (*By the Sea*) (*Op.* 18), *Novelette* (*Op.* 42 *No.* 10), "*Souvenir de printemps*" (*Op.* 23 *No.* 6), and the *Introduction* (*2nd Act "Dylan" drama*), are all obtain-

able arranged for the organ, there is only one original work for the instrument, this being a *Prelude and Fugue* (*Op.* 64), and a very great work it is.

The *Prelude* in G minor is mainly founded upon the duodecuple scale, and, especially in the pedal part, is a movement of great difficulty.

The four-part *Fugue* is also in G minor, and is headed *Allegro (Molto moderato) e dramatico.*

The fugal subject of eight bars is borrowed from the opera *Dylan.* The work terminates with a Coda that leads up to a strenuous climax, followed by a few bars *fff maestoso adagio.*

# CHAPTER VI

## CHAMBER WORKS

| | |
|---|---|
| Op. 17 | (b) String Quartet (No. 1) in D minor—"A Fantasie." |
| Op. 20 | Sextet (No. 1)—Four Dances. |
| Op. 21 | Pianoforte Quartet (No. 1) in G minor. |
| Op. 27 | (a) Quintet (No. 1) for Clarinet and String Quartet. |
| Op. 31 | Pianoforte Quartet (No. 2) in D minor—"Byron." |
| Op. 33 | (a) Sextet (No. 2) for Piano and Wind Instruments—"Soul." |
| | (b) Quintet (No. 3) for Wind Instruments—"Miniature Suite" |
| Op. 28 | Trio (No. 1) in D minor, for Piano, Violin and Horn. |
| Op. 44 | Quintet (No. 4) for Pianoforte and Strings—"Diabolique." |
| Op. 46 | Sextet (No. 4) for Pianoforte and Strings—"In memoriam." |
| Op. 57 | (a) Trio (No. 2) for Pianoforte, Oboe and Viola—"Fairyland." |
| Op. 59 | (a) String Quartet (No. 2)—Belgium, Russia } "Impressions." |

We have now reached a point where the larger art-forms come under discussion. From this point

onward we begin to understand the real Holbrooke. It is only in a few exceptional cases that his smaller works reveal the striking quality of his genius. As it has already been shown, these were mainly written as a means of livelihood, and they often betray a very luke-warm interest in the mind that conceived them. Into his more ambitious chamber, orchestral, and operatic work, the composer projected his loftier and more intellectual ideas. He knew that they could never be popular in the sense that light piano-music and drawing-room "ballads" are popular, and that they could only appeal to a narrower but more musical public. He wrote, therefore, for that public, and also to satisfy his own highest ideals.

Holbrooke has a mind that is quick to assimilate big ideas. His restless nature makes him shun narrow grooves, and he is ever searching for more widely-comprehensive subjects, and for more expansive modes of expression. The intellect, as Emerson has said, is vagabond, and that of Holbrooke is of a peculiarly vagabond nature. Sometimes he o'ertops himself and lets his luxuriant imagination run away with him, so that his work savours of inconsequence and lack of cohesion for the want of concentration on some more salient idea. In spite of this defect that attaches to much of Holbrooke's more ambitious music, however, it possesses this great redeeming feature; it is never dull. Holbrooke may be profuse in thematic material, but that material is nearly always of an interesting and worthy character; and sins against

a too lavish display of wealth are easily forgiveable except by those who yearn vainly to make a similar *étalage*.

The composer's best work has undoubtedly been done when he has had some poem of picturesque suggestiveness to excite the quick responsiveness of his imagination, for he has the gift of creating an atmosphere that belongs only to the world's great tone-poets, such as Beethoven, Wagner, Berlioz, Debussy, Scriabin, Dukas and Strauss, for instance. Poetry, indeed, has had a most remarkable influence upon Holbrooke's music, and it is for this reason that we find him, later in life, converging towards that most intimate alliance of music and poetry, the music-drama, with much the same feeling that induced Wagner to write in the same form.

Many of Holbrooke's chamber-works have a "programme" of some sort, which goes to show the tendency of his leanings, but they none of them owe their impulse to objective causes to the same extent that his symphonic poems do. Perhaps it is also for this reason that the chamber-works sometimes fail to attain the same degree of dignity that the orchestral works always succeed in reaching; for this dignity is not only the effect of orchestral "garb," but of thought and of feeling, too. But, after all, it is only a case of the greater glory dimming the less, and Holbrooke presents a commanding figure among his British confrères as a writer of chamber-music. Our modern school of composers has shown remarkable activity in writing in this form. Sir Edward Elgar, Ernest Austin,

John Ireland, Eugene Goussens, W. Y. Hurlstone, Cyril Scott, J. B. McEwen, R. H. Walthew, T. F. Dunhill, Norman O'Neill, Frank Bridge, H. Balfour Gardiner, and others have all written works of this description, but only those of Edward Elgar, Cyril Scott, John Ireland, and the late W. Y. Hurlstone come into any sort of serious competition with those of Holbrooke.

The chamber-music of the present day differs widely from that of our forefathers. It has not the same regularity nor the same halts on full closes. Subject often merges into subject without any very definite indication where the one ends and the other begins. The relationship of keys is generally retained, however, and the recapitulation section is proceeded with on the old lines with more or less regularity. The development section, on the other hand, is often extended to an inordinate length, and there is a general inclination to make one movement merge into another without terminating it by a full cadence in the key of its tonic. Musical punctuation, indeed, is almost a thing of the past, and many modern scores are like legal documents in their lack of stops. Composers have grown more garrulous, and prefer to discourse in uninterrupted fashion. Consequently, harmony flows into harmony with a painstaking evasion of full cadences in the endeavour to preserve sequential thought. Unfortunately, in this process, the thought often becomes also wavering and vapourish, so that the composer would have been better advised if he had made a pause in order to concentrate his faculties,

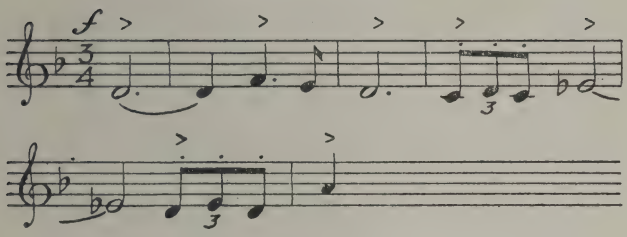
and had then started off in a new or connected channel. This was the method of the old masters, and under it, music was much less liable to the danger of floundering than that based upon the more modern method. The little men who write in this form always suffer shipwreck, and the greater ones find it a difficult road to complete success.

### *String Quartet (No. 1) in D minor—(A Fastasie) Op. 17b.*

The first of Holbrooke's chamber-works, according to the Opus list, though not chronologically, is the *String Quartet in D minor (A Fantasie) Op. 17b,* for two violins, viola and violoncello. This is divided into three connected movements, named after the manner of one of Beethoven's piano sonatas, "*Departure,*" "*Absence*" *and* "*Return,*" and it bears comparison, too, with its great rival.

#### No. 1.—*Departure.*

This movement opens with a vigorous theme in three-four time, given out in unison,

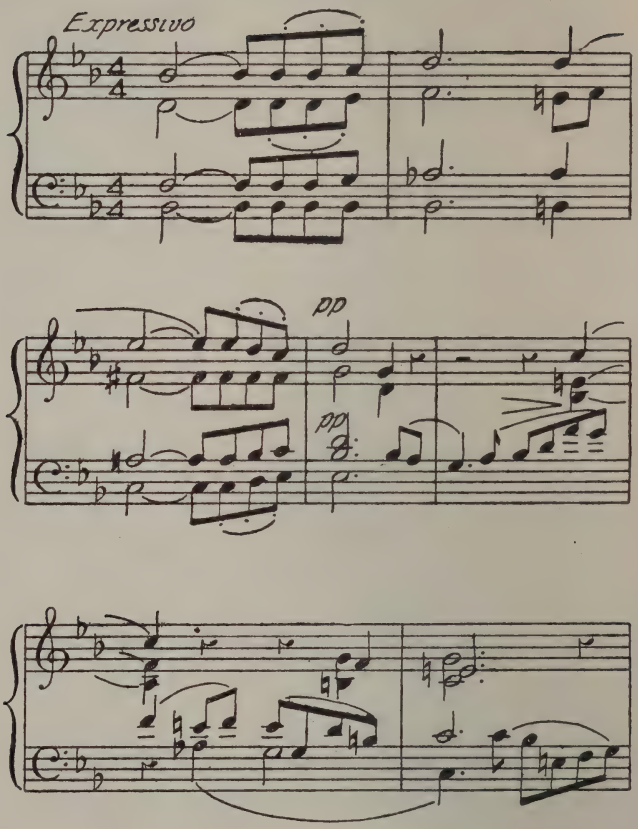


A beautiful, tranquil subject in the key of G major is, later, heard on the violin.

This forms the second part of the second subject. It is accompanied by undulating passages from the other three instruments, and is an exquisite contrast to the material that has preceded it. Much of the music of this movement is richly polyphonic.

## No. 2.—*Absence.*

This portion of the work commences with a plaintive melody in common-time. I quote the first few bars in close score.

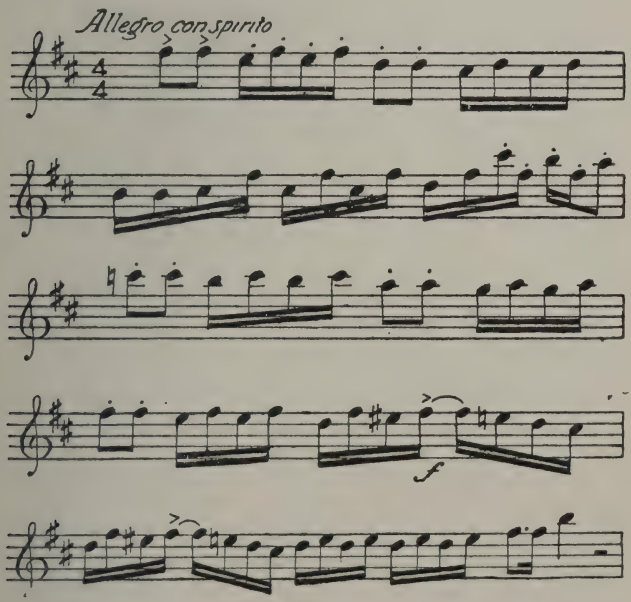



The music proceeds in this quiet strain for four more bars till a sudden *sforzando* is reached, when a poignantly emotional rhythmic figure, that has been partly borrowed from the viola passage of the two preceding bars, leaps into prominence like a

wail of anguish. After this, quieter feelings begin to prevail until the re-entry of the main subject a fourth lower than on its original appearance is heard a few bars further on. Once again, however, the sudden wail breaks the stillness, and this time becomes even more intense.

## No. 3.—*Return.*

Here, all is merriment and exuberant happiness. The first theme, in particular, is permeated with the spirit of mirth—



The fine second subject appears in the key of A major on the first violin, and is doubled by the second violin later. This is of a much broader and more emotional cast than the subject which it supersedes.

Altogether, this quartet is one of Holbrooke's "Fine Works."

### *Sextet No. 1—"Four Dances" (Op. 20).*

Holbrooke's first *Sextet, "The Dances,"* was written during his student days, and was first performed at a Royal Academy Students' Concert in 1894. Since then, it has been often heard, and was revised by its composer in 1906. The combination employed is that of first violin, B flat clarinet, viola, violoncello, contra-basso (or double bassoon), and piano. It is divided into four movements, *Slavonic, Valse* (*Landler*), *Plantation* and *Tarantelle* respectively, of which the first opens *molto allegro* in D minor. After a short introduction, its first subject is announced by the piano in the same key. A good contrast to this is provided by the melody of the second subject, which is in A major, and is played by violin, viola, and 'cello in unison.

The movement follows out the sonata-form fairly regularly, and is very exhilarating in quality.

*Valse* is a graceful and dainty little number in

simple ternary form with its leading melody apportioned between violin and piano. Though it is tuneful and pleasing, there is nothing about it that calls for any particular comment.

*Plantation* opens *allegro expressivo* with a reiterated figure for the piano. The first subject is announced by the first violins, and is of a *baroque* character. The melody of the second subject is the same as that of the third number of the *Dreamland Suite*.

*Tarantelle* is a piece of conventional pattern, of which the first subject is in six-eight time. There are also many other melodic themes in this dance, which shows signs of skilful construction and is full of verve and dash. It forms a good finish to a Sextet which has much fresh charm, though its appeal may be somewhat ephemeral. The best number is undoubtedly the first, though each is interesting.

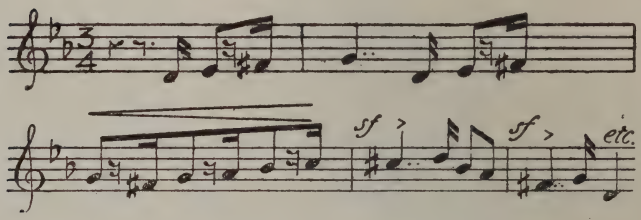
### *Pianoforte Quartet No. 1 in G minor (Op. 21).*

This Quartet is written for pianoforte, violin, viola, and 'cello, and is in three movements. As we have seen, it was originally composed as a trio in 1898, and first appeared as a quartet in 1905. Though it has no definite programmic background,

some lines of Mrs. Hemans define its import to a certain extent—

> "A sounding step was heard by night
> In a church where the mighty slept
> As a mail-clad youth till morning light
> Midst the tombs his vigil kept,
> He walked in dreams . . . etc."

The first movement, *allegro marcato ma non troppo* opens with a bold rhythmic subject for the violin and 'cello in unison, *pianissimo*—

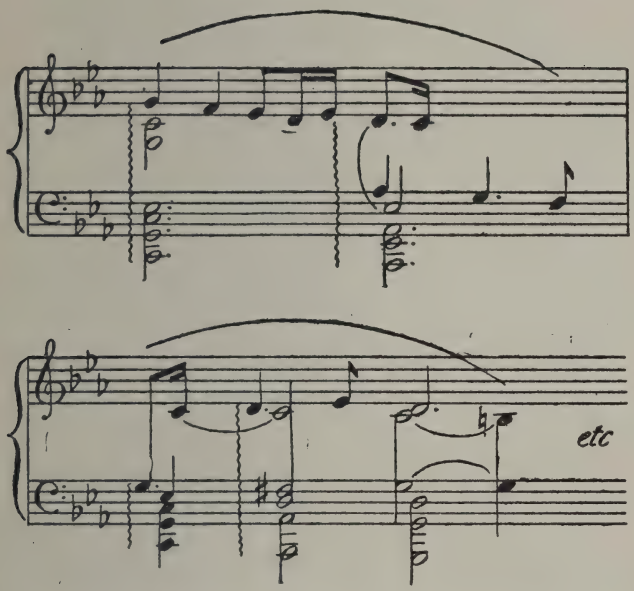



accompanied by simple chords in the piano-part.

The second subject in B flat major is a waltz-like air, which is, first, given to the 'cello as a solo, with pianoforte accompaniment.

There is an interesting *Coda,* in which these two subjects are effectively combined, and the movement closes somewhat abruptly in the key of G major.

The second movement, *Lament,* has a beautiful theme, *larghetto molto expressione,* which is heard first on the piano alone, in C minor—




After a while a new theme of *scherzo*-like quality is introduced as a piano solo and cleverly elaborated.

The *Finale* commences with an introductory passage in the nature of a recitative, which then leads into a *rondo* containing three subjects. These are worked with a good deal of contrapuntal skill, and the character of the movement is bright and joyous, though it is occasionally, also, a little diffuse. It terminates with a *Coda* whose material is chiefly taken from the first subject of the *Rondo*.

### *Quintet (No. 1) for Clarinet and String Quartet (Op. 27a).*

This work consists of only two movements—a *Cavatina* and *Variations*. The *Cavatina* opens in quiet fashion with a short passage in the form of a "call" for muted strings alone. Then the clarinet introduces the main theme, a melody of graceful curves and of sunny charm in three-four time in which the instruments combine in simple but easy fashion. The feeling throughout is one of happy and imperturbable peace.

The theme of the second movement proceeds from the first violin *andante non tanto* (*quasi allegretto*), with an accompaniment from the other strings. The variations, like other work by the composer of the same nature, are cleverly devised and very attractive. They consist of a *Caprice*, a *Romance*, a *Gigue*, an *Elegie* of particular interest, a *Serenade*, a very effective *March*, a *Galop*, a *Larghetto* (in which the melody of "Tom Bowling" is ingeniously utilised), a *Hornpipe*, a *Capriccio* (which serves to introduce the theme of "Three Blind Mice"), and a skilfully written *Fuga*. The Quintet, though unpretentious, is charming throughout.

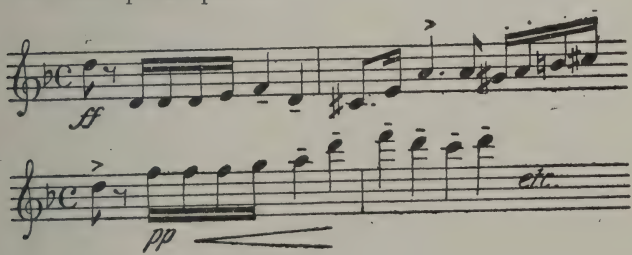
### *Pianoforte Quartet No. 2 (Op. 31).*

Holbrooke's *Quartet "Byron"* in D minor, for piano, violin, viola, and violoncello, largely

owes its atmosphere to ideas formulated during the reading of that part of Greek history that deals with the Ionic revolt and the Persian wars, and more particularly to Byron's translation of the famous War Song—

> "Sons of the Greeks, arise,
> The glorious hour's gone forth,
> And worthy of such ties,
> Display who gave us birth.
> Sons of the Greeks! let us go
> In arms against the foe, &c."

In defence of such a subject for his inspiration, the composer has said that "we can have the 'heroic' spirit with four souls, as with four hundred, sometimes with more unanimity." The work was written between 1896 and 1898, and was rewritten 1902, and is in three movements, though it is played without a break. There is no introduction, and we dash at once into the bellicose first subject *allegro feroce, e vigoroso,* which is given out by the strings and doubled, part of the way, by the lower piano-part—



The bridge-passage introduces new and interestingly bold material, and leads to the appearance of the second subject as a piano solo in F major, the key of the relative major of the movement. This has a bold, swinging march-rhythm. The development portion of this movement is of particular beauty.

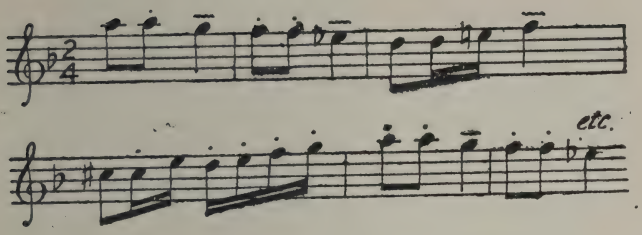
The second movement opens *adagio sostenuto* (*quasi recitativo*) in the key of A major as a musical definition of the lines

> "Sparta, Sparta, why in slumbers,
> Lethargic dost thou lie?
> Awake, and join thy numbers, &c."

Here, the muted first violin gives out a plaintive air, accompanied by the other strings muted and by a *tremolo* from the piano. It is followed by a *poco piu mosso* whose emotional appeal is richer and more dignified. This gradually grows in intensity, and finally yields itself to complete abandonment, during which, passages in thirds, often syncopated, from a leading feature of the piano part. A *diminuendo* then sets in, and leads us into the last movement of the work, a *molto animato,* descriptive of the lines—

> "Leonidas recalling,
> That chief of ancient song
> Who saved ye once from falling, etc."

This is in the form of an attractive *rondo,* the long first subject of which commences as follows—



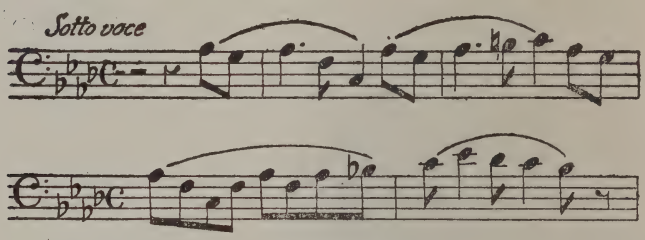

The second subject is of a quieter nature—*lento semplice*—and is given out by the 'cello, with a simple accompaniment of detached chord groups from the piano.

The work ends in a strenuous manner with a pompous, dignified theme.

### *Sextet No. 2.—"Soul" (Op. 33a).*

This Sextet is for piano, flute, oboe, clarinet, horn and bassoon, and is very distinguished in the quality of its themes. It carried off the Lesley Alexander prize in 1901, and, as we saw in Chapter I., was originally written as a Quintet for flute, clarinet, horn, bassoon and piano during the composer's student days. By adding an oboe part, Holbrooke converted it into a Sextet. The work is headed *Mein sehen und verlargen,* whilst the composer has also referred to it as his "Soul" Sextet, so that we have some clue as to its significance. The first movement, which is in Sonata form, opens in the key of F. minor *allegro appassionato non*

*troppo* with a bar for piano alone, after which the bassoon enters with the first subject *sotto voce*. This is of a yearning quality and harbours considerable intensity of emotion. It begins in the following manner—

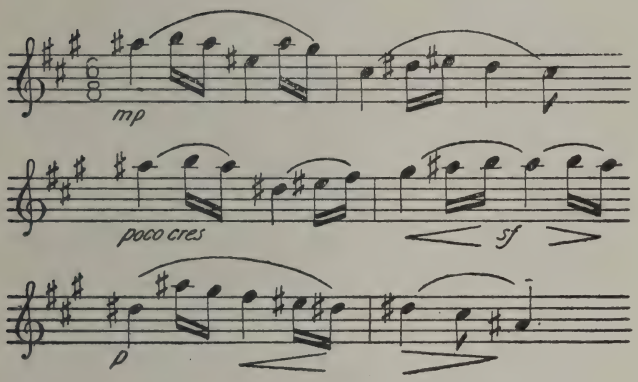



The bridge -passage which follows is somewhat prolix.

The second subject is given out as a solo on the horn, accompanied by the piano, and comes like balm in Gilead. This is in the key of B flat major, and is of a particularly suave and melodious character.

In the *Adagio* movement, ten bars of solo work for the piano of a sombre nature lead up to the appearance of the main subject on the clarinet in D major. An interesting episode, announced first on the piano and repeated on the bassoon, then leads by simple gradations to the second subject in A major, which is given out by the clarinet and bassoon in unison and unaccompanied.

A little later on, a striking new theme is heard from the piano—




As the movement proceeds, there are many passionate passages of lashed emotion.

The *Rondo* in F major is a movement full of boisterous, infectious gaiety. The *rondo* theme itself, which is preceded by twelve bars of introductory matter, is particularly bold and rhythmic.

The second subject is in the key of C major, whilst the episodical part of the movement is of rather a discursive nature and the least effective portion of the work.

The wind-instruments of this *Sextet* may be replaced, though rather to its disadvantage, by two violins, two violas, and 'cello, and, in this form, it has been most often performed. Its rhythmic material is, generally, of a very high quality, but it has not the polyphonic symmetry of the first String Quartet. There is a *malaise* in the movement of some of the parts that shows immaturity of technique, and a good balance between the various

instruments is not always maintained. The most successful portion of the work is, undoubtedly, the slow movement.

Concerning the cleverness of the work, as the production of a mere youth, there can be no doubt. And it is not only clever, but it is also musicianly and often noble and dignified. It atones for many of the lesser works of the composer, and shows what a latent strength they covered up.

### *Quintet (No. 3) (Op. 33b).*

The little *Quintet,* forming the second part of Opus 33, is hardly a quintet in the ordinary acceptance of that term. It is entitled *A miniature characteristic suite,* and is written for flute, oboe, clarinet, horn and bassoon, and is little more than a collection of mere sketches. It dates back to the year 1897, being composed when Holbrooke was barely nineteen. The number of sketches which it comprises are five—(1) In the Fields, (2) A Joyous Moment, (3) Minuet, (4) A Lament, (5) Une Fête.

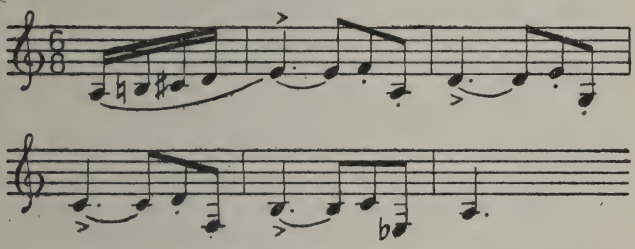
### *Horn Trio in D minor (Op. 28).*

This *Trio,* for the unusual combination of violin, horn and pianoforte, is one of the brightest and most genial of Holbrooke's works. It is also uniformly melodious, and, in its middle movement, attains to considerable dignity and beauty of expres-

sion. Its sentiment has, to a large extent, been suggested by lines from Byron's *Don Juan*—

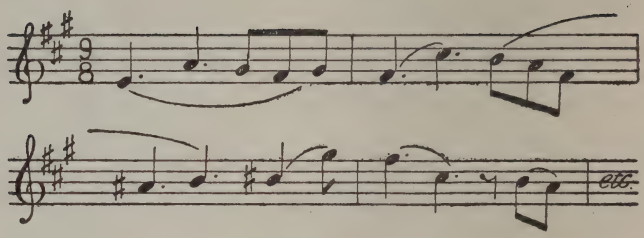
> "There's music in the sighing of a reed;
> There's music in the gushing of a rill,
> There's music in all things if men had ears;
> Their earth is but an echo of the spheres."

The first subject has a pleasing lilt—



The second subject is first heard upon the piano in F major. At the close of this, the *durchführung* portion of the movement commences. Here, the subject above quoted is called upon to play the chief part, though new material is also introduced and the writing is concise and vigorous.

The middle movement, *adagio non troppo,* in A major is beautiful in conception, peaceful and restful, and with the melodic flow constantly maintained throughout. It consists of two well-contrasted airs, the first of which (in nine-eight time) proceeds from the horn and is preceded by a short pianoforte introduction in which the character of the ensuing thematic outline is defined. The opening phrases of this horn melody are as follows:—




This is accompanied by chord groups upon the piano, in which syncopations are prominent.

The second theme in three-four time is also first heard on the horn. The violin repeats this, and then the piano gives out a varied version of it, whilst the other two instruments strew about fine phrases during its progress.

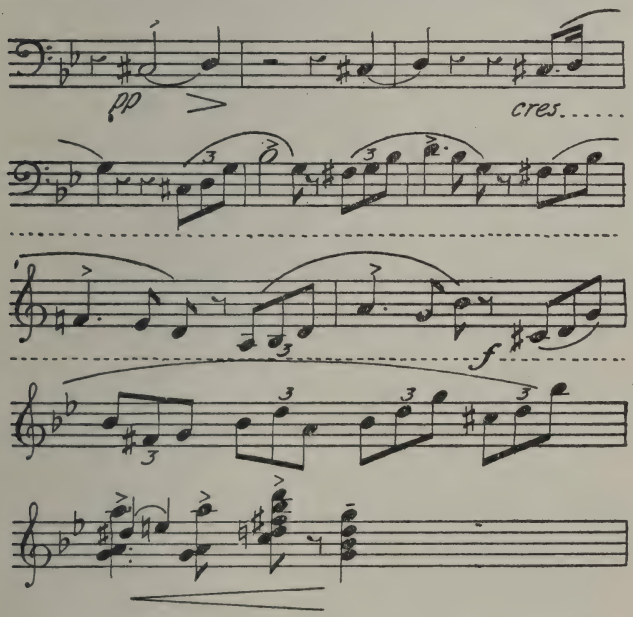
The last movement is a *rondo*, the theme of which is first stated by the piano *molto vivace* in the key of D major, whilst the second subject is of a march-like character.

This Trio is uniformly interesting and, though it strives after no big effects, is artistically strong. It charms chiefly by reason of the placidity of its moods and of its cheery, optimistic sentiment, and, by contrasting it with the more intense work of the composer's pen, one is made to realise very vividly the many-sided nature of his genius.

### *Quintet No. 4 for Piano and Strings—"Diabolique"—(Op. 44).*

This fine quintet in G minor is the only published chamber work of the composer that contains more than three movements. The little *Miniature Suite*

and the "*Dance*" *Sextet* hardly enter into the comparison. The G minor quintet is generally known as the "Diabolique," from the name given by the composer to its third movement. It is written for piano, two violins, viola and violoncello, and begins *allegro, molto fuoco agitato* with a reiterated pedal chord for the strings. The first subject, in common time, is announced by the piano at the second bar, and is full of portentous character.



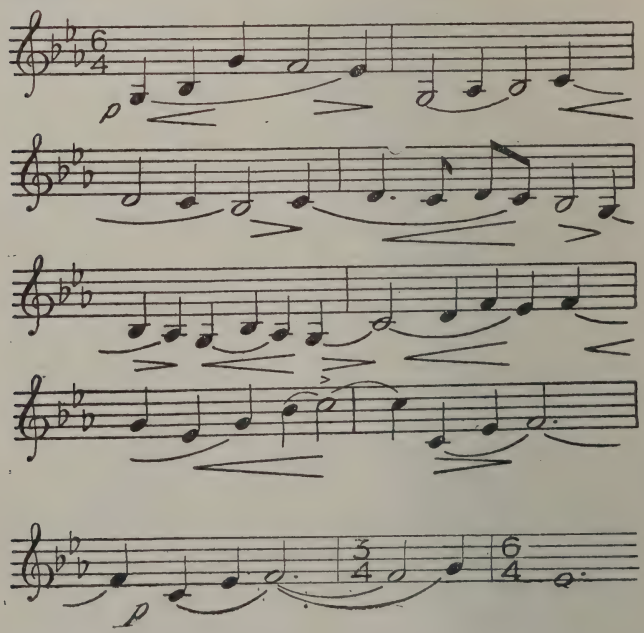

This theme has an almost Schumannesque quality about it, and lends much nobleness to the opening part of the movement.

The second subject enters on the viola in the key

of B flat minor, and is answered by the 'cello, both being accompanied by the piano alone.

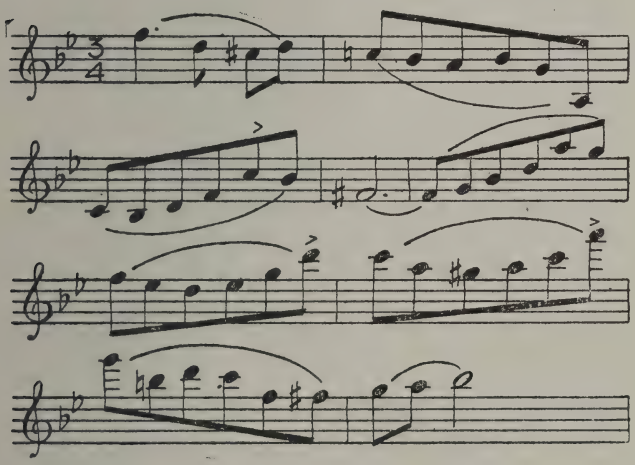
An *allargando* leads into a *coda* in which the first subject reappears in the piano-part, and is canonically imitated by the first violin and viola in unison. This merges into new material, moving over a tonic pedal and terminating on a soft chord of the dominant thirteenth of E flat, the key in which the second movement now opens.

It does so with a beautiful, suave melody *adagio, molto expressione e sostenuto* in six-four time that has the strength and eloquence of a Beethoven conception. It is first heard as a solo on the first violin—



There is also a second melody of much distinction introduced by the viola.

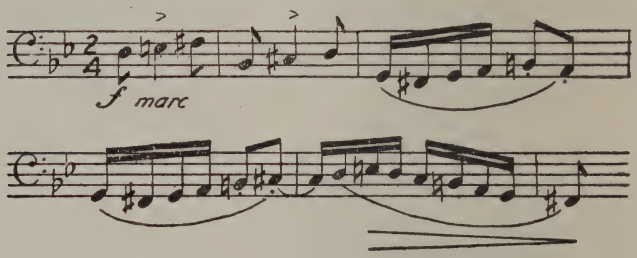
The third movement is a Valse (Diabolique). Two introductory bars for strings alone, followed by seven for the piano only, in which the nature of the ensuing pianoforte accompaniment is defined, lead into a nine-bar waltz theme, with an extraordinary compass.



The first violin starts off with this original subject —which is given in canon—and is next delivered by the second violin, viola, and 'cello in turn.

*The finale,* which opens *presto vivace* in G minor, is in rather loose *rondo* form, the *rondo* subject first appearing in the piano part alone. From this rhythm and others a fugal subject is later on formed

in the key of D major, the dominant key of the movement.




This takes the place of the repetition of the first subject.

There is an extraordinarily difficult *coda* to this movement, in which reminiscences of all the previous subjects are heard, and the conclusion is reached in a strenuous manner with a fine sense of climax of the tense feeling that has pervaded the work through nearly the whole of its career.

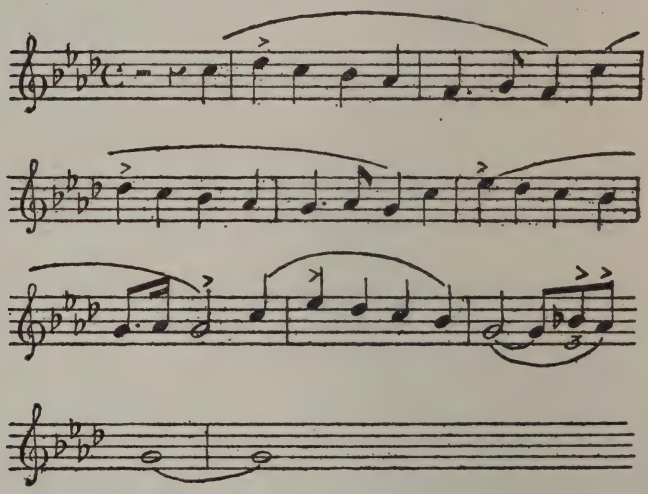
Altogether, this quintet is of very great import. In the nobility and beauty of much of its melodic material it yields place to none of the other chamber works. Its first and second movements, in particular, show a magnificent strength of emotional expression, as far as their main themes go. It is in the development portions of the work that the composer occasionally verges from the line of consequent thought. He sees that thematic development is necessary, and achieves it in ingenious fashion. In the process, however, the drift of the matter that had preceded it is frequently lost, or,

at least, the interest that it has aroused becomes impaired rather than enhanced, and we often have to wait some time before the converging threads of thought reunite. In this G minor quintet, too, the composer is apt to treat his few instruments rather after the manner of an orchestra. It was written at a time when big orchestral works were beginning to occupy his attention very considerably. *The Raven* and *The Viking* had both been produced, and the flattering reception of these works by the press had indicated to their composer the direction in which the most powerful bent of his genius lay. The poem for orchestra and pianoforte, *The Song of Gwyn ap Nudd,* was already completed, and he was busy planning *Ulalume* (Poem No. 3).

### *Sextet (No. 4) in F minor—In Memoriam—(Op. 46).*

This work is written for pianoforte, two violins, viola, violoncello and contra-basso, and is dedicated by the composer to his "friend and professor Frederick Westlake." It was originally written as a quintet, and opens *poco adagio, expressivo,* in common time, with a solemn and dignified passage, in which the violins, viola and 'cello play in unison and are supported on the second half of each bar by the piano and contra-basso. A little later, the first subject of the work

is announced in octaves on the piano, and is accompanied by softly undulating movements from the strings—



The music, as it proceeds, becomes full of stressful emotion, and is broken by a pause giving one a sense of almost Nirvanic calm. The second subject in C major follows immediately, but there is rather a falling off in interest at this point. With the Coda, however, the music pulsates towards a more passionate abandonment, and reaches a high point of intensity and beauty.

The slow movement *Elegie* commences *larghetto, con molto sentimento* with a few harp-like chords

for piano solo in the key of B flat major. It has only one subject, but this is of a very eloquent quality.

The *finale* is in the key of F major, and is in the form of a vivacious *rondo*.

Taking everything into consideration, this *Sextet*, with the exception of the last movement, which is trivial, has much artistic importance, and its themes are of a high and mature quality. Some of them have a noble significance, and are of an appealing and aesthetic beauty. The chief defect of the work lies in its heterogeneous character.

### *Trio No. 2—"Fairyland"* (*Op.* 57, *No.* 1).

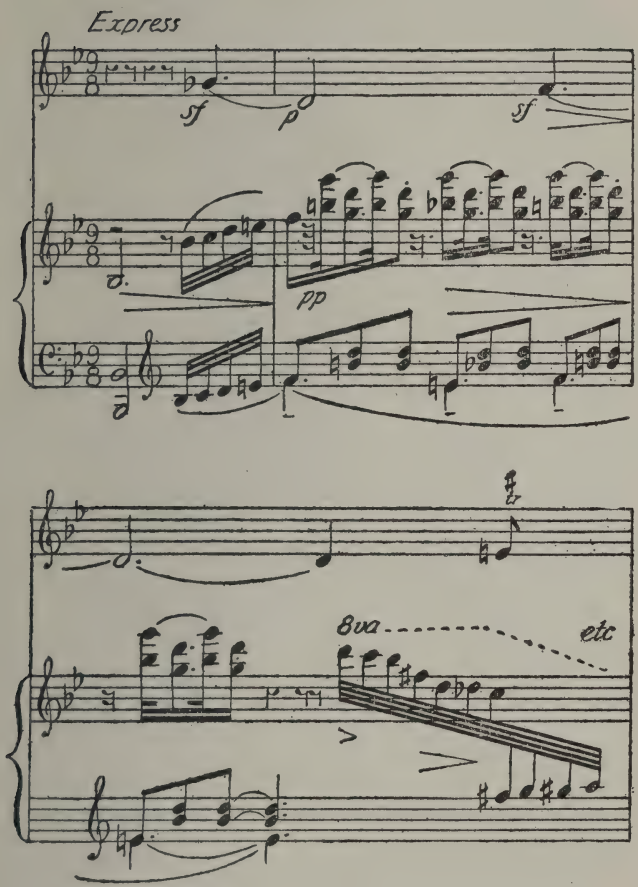
This Trio is for viola, oboe (or oboe d'amore), or (clarinet in B flat), or (flute), and Pianoforte, and is one of the strangest of all Holbrooke's chamber works. It is based upon a poem of Edgar Allan Poe's telling of a land where

> "Huge moons there wax and wane
> Again—again—again,
> Every moment of the night."

At twelve by the moon-dial, "one more filmy than the rest" comes down and buries everything up quite in "a labyrinth of light." In the morning, this moony covering rises and soars in the skies. Its atomies, however, dissever into a shower and

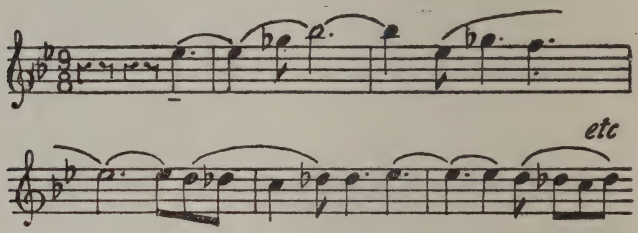
fall upon the wings of butterflies, who thus bring specimens of it to earth.

The music that defines this poem is weird and intensely sad. Thematically, the work is rather patchy, but, if the melodic flow is interrupted by many cross-currents, there is a unity of *feeling* about the music that prevents it from becoming chaotic. In character, it is vague and nebulous, for this was a requisite quality to render it a faithful reflection of the eerie sentiment of the poem. Odd little rhythms flicker up, here and there, like will-o'-the-wisps on a dark night, and then suddenly disappear. The interest of the *Nocturne* lies in its "creepy" suggestiveness and in its spirit of pure fantasy. It might almost be the musical definition of a hazy vision seen in an opiate dream. Its themes, taken alone, have no great distinction, yet the *tout ensemble* is one of rich imaginative beauty to which the exquisite delicacy of the harmonization contributes largely. The instruments combine in happy fashion to give voice to some very graphic ideas.




The music proceeds in a similar manner for a while with the mournful droop in the viola and oboe melody of the upper stave still maintained.

A new theme, however, soon asserts itself on the viola—




to be followed, a little later, by another of equal interest from the oboe.

The trio ends softly, slowly, and mournfully in the same key in which it began, and leaves a curious feeling of disturbing elusiveness behind it. It is a conception of which only modern art could have been capable, and it is as light as a *souffle* and as ethereal as a summer cloud.

### *String Quartet No. 2 (Op. 59a).*

This work takes the form of a couple of "Impressions," the first of Belgium and the second of Russia. The earlier movement is a *Serenade* in which, after a few preliminary chords for the lower strings, the first violin sighs out a beautiful dolorous air. This is then taken up by the second violin, and afterwards repeated by the first violin and effectively accompanied by the other instru-

ments. A *poco piu mosso* succeeds, in which a new and exquisite subject is given to the viola. And so on through the whole movement melody flows in a constant and uninterrupted stream. It is one of the most lyrically charming things to be found among the composer's chamber works, whilst, in technique, it is comparatively simple.

The second movement, *Russian Dance,* is based on the Russian Folk tune that forms the basis of the last portion of the fine Orchestral Suite *Les Hommages,* described in a later chapter. The movement follows the model of that of the larger work fairly closely in its earlier part. In the development section and also in the closing passages, however, it varies from it considerably. It is treated fugally, and is as notable structurally as it is rich in exhilarating impulse.

To speak of the chamber works collectively as chamber works, the *String Quartet* (*Op.* 17*b*) perhaps fits in most happily with its titular designation and leaves no feeling behind it, as occasional passages in some of the other chamber works do, that it would have been better executed in fuller orchestral form. Its themes are well suited to the instruments for which they are written, and it is particularly concise in thought and elaboration. It may not have the dignity that is to be found in portions of the "*In Memoriam*" *Sextet* of the "*Soul*" *Sextet,* or of the "*Diabolique*" *Quintet,* but, with its simple pathos and also with its geniality, one feels that its musical form is in perfect accord. It shows, also, a more

logical and more consistent development of musical ideas than is to be found in any other of the chamber works, yet, in a "Competition," this work could not win a "Prize!"

# CHAPTER VII

## ORCHESTRAL POEMS

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| "The Raven" | - No. 1 | - | (Op. 25). |
| "The Viking" | - No. 2 | - | (Op. 32). |
| "Ulalume" | - No. 3 | - | (Op. 35). |
| "Byron" | - No. 4 | . | (Op. 39). |
| "Queen Mab" | - No. 5 | - | (Op. 45). |
| "The Bells" | - No. 6 | - | (Op. 50). |

"Song of Gwyn ap Nudd" (Pianoforte Concerto) No. 7 - (Op. 52).

HOLBROOKE has always had much the same feeling with regard to music that Dante had with regard to human language when he wrote in his "Paradise" —"Oh Speech, how feeble and how faint art thou to give conception birth." Probably most creative minds have this feeling and are never quite satisfied with the medium whereby they endeavour to convey their messages to mankind. For it is a true saying that "Art has its boundaries, but imagination has none." Holbrooke, for instance, despite the large quantity of chamber-music that he has written, has never felt that this mode of expression represents his individuality to nearly the same extent that his orchestral poems do. In these latter

works, he considers himself more pictorial and realistic, whilst they generally possess a much greater spontaneity by reason of their freedom from conventional form.

In fact, when we come to analyse many of the composer's chamber works, we are often led to the conclusion that he is working in too cramped surroundings. The musical ideas constantly clamour for less constricted methods of workmanship, and for a more sumptuous setting. The effect is often that of a drama with "big passions strutting on a petty stage." Still, as we have seen, those works enshrine many beauties even if they do lie some distance down the slope that leads upwards to the *summit* of achievement. Moreover, it is not every composer who has the strength even to *conceive* "big passions."

It is as an orchestral composer, however, that Holbrooke has won the highest laurels. He has a genuine architectonic mind that can build up wonderful effects with the large and varied orchestra that he so often employs. Some of the curious instrumental combinations that we encounter in his works are startling and sensational, but they nearly always manage to create the impression desired, and the contrasts of tonal colouring generally are full of opulent suggestion. Nor is it a mere sporadic ability that he displays in his instrumental writing; it is an ability that pervades all his orchestral work. The greater the demands upon his imaginative faculties, the more eagerly and successfully he braces himself to meet them. Strange

dramatic situations particularly appeal to him, for they lend him an opportunity for harmonic and tonal experimentalism of which he is quick to take advantage. His work of late years has shown a wonderful vitality and strength by reason of this empirical method of writing.

Like all those who venture to think independently with an utter insouciance as to conventional thought on the same subject, his work has often aroused bitter criticism. To the composer, however, it is a perfectly natural method of expression rising logically out of the subject that generated it. Among the many extravagances of much present-day art, it seems hard to understand how any one can find offence in the clear thought and dramatic fitness that distinguishes all the best work of Josef Holbrooke. As Addison wrote as long ago as 1711, "Music is of a relative nature, and that what is harmony to one ear may be dissonance to another"; but who, in the present age, has any consciousness of dissonances in the works of Beethoven, Schumann and Wagner that once so rudely shocked our forbears.

Holbrooke did not attempt the writing of a big orchestral work until he had assumed the *togo virilis* and had many years experience as a composer behind him. Then the influence of Liszt, as a composer of such programmic works as *Tasso, Les Preludes, Mazeppa* and *Prometheus,* began to stir within him. He saw in programme music an opportunity for creating a *raison d'être* for the picturesque and dramatic ideas that came to him so

readily and that, but for some definite generating subject, might have appeared exaggerated. As a consequence, he wrote *The Raven* as an illustration of E. A. Poe's poem of that name. The dramatic power and maturity of technique displayed in this work rendered the inauguration of Holbrooke as a serious orchestral writer very conspicuous, and this first "poem" of his never fails to leave a deep impression behind it whenever it is performed (which our conductors do not allow to happen too often!).

*The Raven* and the two ensuing orchestral poems, *The Viking* and *Ulalume,* were all purely orchestral works in which the thematic matter has been suggested by certain salient features of the poems. In the three succeeding works belonging to the same category, the composer thought fit to employ voices in his scheme of construction.

The merits and demerits of programme music have always formed rather a vexed question among critics. Lamb gave us an extreme and crabbed view in his essay, "A Chapter on Ears": "Above all, those insufferable concertos, and pieces of music, as they are called, do plague and embitter my apprehension. Words are something; but to be exposed to an endless battery of mere sounds; to be long a-dying; to lie stretched upon a rack of roses; to keep up languor by unintermitted effort; to pile honey upon sugar, and sugar upon honey to an interminable tedious sweetness, to fill up sound with feeling, and strain ideas to keep pace with it; to gaze on empty frames, and to be forced

to make the pictures for yourself; to read a book, *all stops,* and be obliged to supply the verbal matter; to invest extempore tragedies to answer to the vague gestures of an inexplicable rambling mime—these are faint shadows of what I have undergone from a series of the ablest-executed pieces of this empty instrumental music."

However pleasant one feels Lamb's general views on life and matters to be, one cannot accept his ideas on music with any very reverent attention. He does, however, touch upon one weakness of programme music, namely, the loss of interest that we suffer if we have no clue to the composer's meaning, of which I shall speak later.

Unlike Liszt, Holbrooke calls his works "orchestral poems" and not "symphonic poems," and thereby suggests for them a freedom from all classical form. This freedom, however, renders them rather more reliant upon the derivative poem than is the symphonic form, for, in the former case, the leading events of the subject are reflected in the music with much the same regularity as the leading events of a drama thrown on a cinematograph screen, whilst, in the latter case, only some very general aspects of the subject are defined.

We must judge Holbrooke's orchestral poems, then, in the manner in which he would have us judge them, namely, with a pre-supposed complete knowledge of the poems upon which they are based. As a result, they rise before us as triumphant works of art, precursors of the great operas in which his dramatic gifts were to find later a more expansive

and natural outlet. In none of the poems is there any hint of pedantry. The composer expresses himself with a romantic freedom, and with an amazing wealth of suggestive detail such as are only possible to men of high-gifted genius. His music rises level with his poetic subject, and reflects its changing moods and fancies with the same fidelity that a still pool mirrors the over-hanging trees along its water's rim and the sky arch that spans it.

There is one poet, however, in particular, with which the name of Holbrooke must always be associated, and that is the American poet, Edgar Allan Poe. We feel that, in some sub-conscious manner, these two creative minds of different ages meet on the same spiritual plane in a manner that is both inevitable and wonderful. The work of the one artist seems to complete that of the other so as to form a subtle link between literature and music. Other conjoined names, such as those of Schumann and Heine, Hugo Wolf and Mörike, Debussy and Maeterlink, also rise to mind as typical examples of other supreme alliances between the sister arts.

To some critics, the poetry of Poe appears little more than the morbid exhalation of a contorted brain. They entirely overlook the fertile imagination that underlies it and the wonderful phraseology that falls so musically upon the ear. Few poets indeed have had a greater gift of creating atmosphere or a more subtle sense of word values. The situations that Poe creates are often terrible and at times ghastly, but, behind them all, it is hard not to feel the warmth of the Promethean fires. At the

root of all his poetry there is a sincerity and depth of feeling that cannot be ignored. The pictures that he evokes are so vivid that we are arrested by their glare and held spellbound by their weird fascination. Only a poet of exceptional qualities possesses this power of subjugating our human senses.

It was this strange poetic spirit that Holbrooke was destined to reflect so faithfully, and, by choosing a subject from Poe as a basis for his first big orchestral work, he set the seal upon his genius as a descriptive and dramatic composer.

### *The Raven*—(*No.* 1)—*Op.* 25.

This work was first performed at the Crystal Palace Saturday afternoon concerts on March 3rd, 1900, under the baton of Sir August Manns. The gruesome story that it tells is a familiar one. The weary student is pondering over his books at the midnight hour of a day in bleak December, trying to find a surcease of his sorrow for his lost Lenore, when there comes a rapping at the door of his chamber. Fantastic terrors beset him as he opens the door to encounter nothing but the darkness. Fearfully he whispers the name "Lenore," which a murmuring echo repeats. The student then returns to his chamber, but again the tapping sounds louder than before. This time he goes to the window lattice and flings open the shutter, and a Raven flutters in and perches on a bust of Pallas

above his chamber door. The Student asks the solemn bird what his "lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore," to which the Raven makes the enigmatic response—"Nevermore." When the Student expresses an expectation that the bird will leave him on the morrow, the Raven again croaks out the same reply. Man and Bird then face each other in grim scrutiny, during which the former speculates aloud upon the meaning of the latter's presence, and the Raven continues to ejaculate his monotonous reply. Finally, the Student asks whether his soul "within the distant Aidenn it shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore." Again comes the answer "Nevermore!" and, in anger, the Student bids his ghastly visitant depart, but is again left impotent before the reiterated fatalistic utterance of the Raven, and there we leave them, man and bird, in forced and grisly companionship.

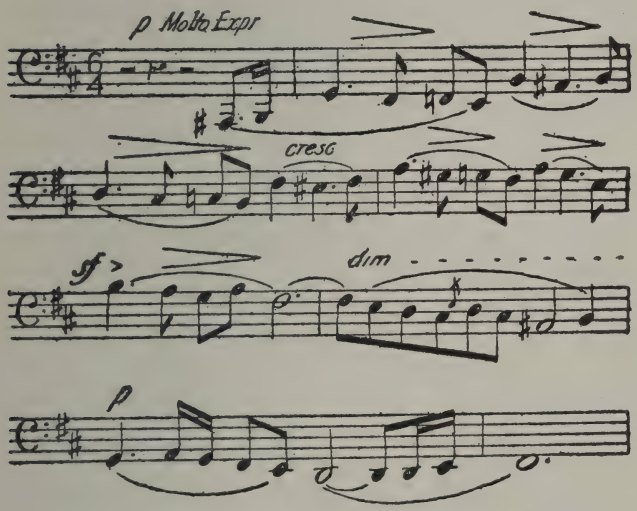
The orchestra employed in this poem is a large one—1 piccolo, 3 flutes, 3 oboes, 1 cor-anglais, 2 clarinets in A, 1 bass clarinet in A, 3 bassoons, 1 double bassoon, 4 (or 8) horns in F, 4 trumpets in F, 3 trombones, bass tuba, 3 tympani, gong, cymbals, harps and strings—and the work is one of rich poetic imagination and of wonderful tonal colouring. The composer has painted his picture with no hesitating touch, and its various details are limned in with a genius that sheds a rare light on the romantic possibilities contained in Poe's verses.

The opening bars, *largo molto sostenuto* at once

suggest the uncanny nature of the work, and are headed—

> "Once upon a midnight dreary
> As I pondered weak and weary."

Here a sinister theme surges up in the orchestra from the lower strings—




It is followed by a gloomy subject, also from the lower strings, suggestive of the tapping of the raven at the chamber door, and for a time these two themes in alternation on different degrees of the scale dominate the situation until we reach a musical passage *poco animato* descriptive of the lines commencing—

> "And the rustling of each purple curtain
> thrilled me"

where vagrant movements in thirds from the wood wind allied to independent subjects from the brass create an eerie and terror-haunted feeling. Again we hear the insistent knocking, followed by the fateful theme of p. 131 below an agitated outburst from the full orchestra. The music continues to hover around these suggestions in a very graphic manner for some time, one passage of consecutive chords of the seventh with the minor third and diminished fifth from the wood wind being particularly daring and weird in effect. The line—

"Presently my soul grew stronger"

has suggested a new melody, which, however, appears rather colourless beside the rest of the thematic material of the work. Then the sound of tapping again asserts itself in a new figure from the horns. The music that depicts the opening of the door by the student to discover nothing but the darkness is good, whilst his whispered word "Lenore!" is represented by the hushed tones of the first violins and 'cellos following the inflections of the speaking voice. Again comes the tapping, growing louder and louder, till it attains a wild outburst of fury leading into a ponderous, self-assertive subject descriptive of the lines—

"Open here I flung the shutter
Then with many a flirt and flutter,
In there stepped a stately Raven
Of the saintly days of yore."

to the delivery of which the whole orchestra contributes with eloquent effect. This movement is

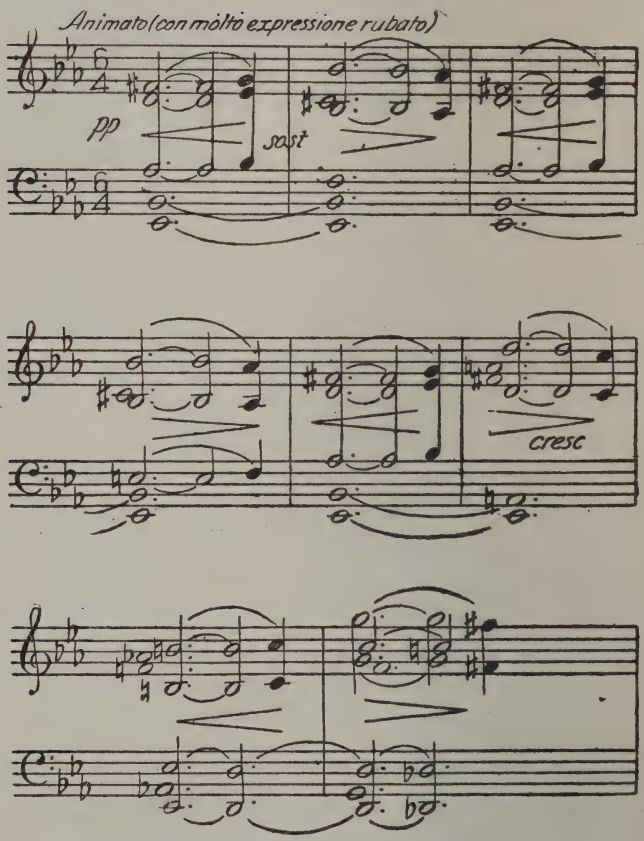
maintained for some time, and then towards the close grows quieter. "Tell me what thy lordly name is!" the student demands, and the phraseology of the music, proceeding from the horns and trumpets, accords with the phraseology of the words, as it also does in the case of the reply, "Nevermore!" heard twice on the horns and once on the oboes. The full orchestra then proceeds to reach a pitch of riotous impetuosity in agreement with the student's frenzied questions—

> "'Prophet!' said I, 'Thing of evil—'"

—wood-wind and upper strings rushing along in a mad career of semi-quavers with a chordal support from the other instruments. Two more "Nevermores!" death blows to all the student's hopes, again wail out mournfully from the horns, to be followed shortly afterwards by the self-assertive "Raven" theme to typify his subjection to the bird's baleful companionship. The lines—

> "Leave my loneliness unbroken!
> Take thy beak from out my heart"

—have suggested music of a limpid, lucid beauty, whose soul-stirring character shows how greatly the spirit of the man has been broken—




On its first appearance, this theme is orchestrated in the lightest of colours. It is then repeated with some effective arabesques from the wood-wind, and then, with a few slight changes, proceeds to

dominate the situation and to become more and more passionate in character.

The last picture we have of the obsessed student is one of melancholy resignation to fate—

> "And my soul from out that shadow
> That lies floating on the floor
> Shall be lifted—nevermore!"

—where a rising and falling melody from the lower strings, below quiet chords for brass, lifts up a plaintive voice. All is deepest gloom as the clarinets sob out two final "Nevermores," followed by a beat of the drum.

### "*The Viking*"—(*No.* 2)—*Op.* 32

This work made its first appearance at New Brighton in 1902. It owes its inspiration to Longfellow's poem "*The Skeleton in Armour,*" and originally passed under that name. The story that the American poet has to tell centres around the life adventures of a certain ghostly apparition of an armoured skeleton, who, when besought to speak, thus narrates his history:—

He was a Viking from the wild Baltic strand who joined a corsair's crew and embarked on perilous adventures. Then he was captured by the charms of a blue-eyed maid and vows of love were plighted. When, however, he asked her father, Hildebrand, for his daughter's hand, his suit was received with loud laughs of scorn; but the Viking's love recog-

nised no barriers and he carried the maid away to sea with him. Hildebrand pursued, and a mighty battle was fought in which Hildebrand's ship was sunk with all hands. The Viking sought distant shores where, with his beloved, he lived a life of perfect happiness till her death severed the blissful bond. Hateful to him then became the race of mankind, so that finally he procured for himself a grateful death at his spear's point.

Holbrooke has regarded this subject less from its sinister than from its romantic and picturesque possibilities, and to this reason we owe the change in the poem's title. The name—"*The Viking*"—is much more in accordance with the spirit of the music than Longfellow's heading to his poem—"*The Skeleton in Armour.*"

One likes *The Viking* for its many scenes of virile action and for its well contrasted and tender love passages. It is a work that owes its feeling to the "heyday in the blood" that leads youth in quest of new experiences and risky enterprises, and it has a tonic effect on the listener that is very salutary. It has not quite the poetical strength or the psychological insight of *The Raven,* or the same organic design, but it shows an advance in technique in many directions. The ideas are expressed concisely, and there is a good deal of economy in the use of material, but the themes are wrought more into the form of a mosaic than into a material of more subtly blended colours. It is, however, a mosaic of very striking hues and of very effective pattern.

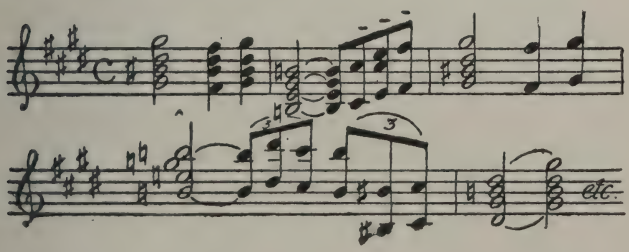
The work is scored for piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, cor-anglais, 3 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contra-bassoon, 8 or 4 horns, 2 cornets, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, bass-trombone, bass-tuba, 3 drums, big drum, cymbals, gong, 2 harps and strings.

The opening passage of this orchestral poem, where the horns have some insistent thematic material, depicts for us the appearance of the spectral guest and the fearful demand that he shall speak and explain his presence. Into the fabric of this slow, lugubrious music, a little *motif* of descending chromatic notes, in the tones of the second violin, springs to life suggestive of the supernatural character of the poem. This becomes of much significance as the work proceeds.

The Viking commences his tale—

"I was a Viking old!"

—and the music, proceeding from wood-wind and brass, is stern and forceful till quieter passages intimate to us a softer side to the old warrior's character. This is further emphasised by the important theme which soon follows, and which has a rich romantic quality—



It proceeds from violins and 'cellos, with support from the remaining strings, harps, lower woodwind, brass and drums, and with reinforcement later from the full orchestra, the effect being one of wonderful beauty. The lines—

> "Oft to his frozen lair
> Tracked I the grisly bear"

—are depicted by an *allegro agitato,* founded chiefly upon impetuous chords among which the little chromatic *motif* wanders suggestively. The music grows more and more impetuous as it proceeds, a chromatic movement from the lower strings, bassoons and trombones particularly arresting the attention. The next subject of importance is the one generated by the lines—

> "But when I older grew
> Joining a corsair's crew
> O'er the dark sea I flew"

—which represents sea movement, and is very buoyant and happy in effect.

After working up to an exuberant climax, this movement yields place to a *poco meno mosso* under the heading—

> "Once as I told in glee
> Tales of the stormy sea
> Soft eyes did gaze on me
> Burning yet tender"

—where we have a suave and gracious melody of tender outline from the first violins, in which piccolo and flute later participate.

A new theme of pompous character grows out of the lines, commencing—

> "Loud sang the minstrels all
> Chanting his glory"

—which booms forth from the solo trumpet, supported by other brass instruments and the harps. Then the music becomes more strenuous in keeping with the scornful rejection by Hildebrand of the request for his daughter's hand by the Viking, and some clever suggestions of his derisive laughter are heard from the wood-wind.

The music descriptive of the sea fight is graphic, and proceeds from the full orchestra, being mainly based on chromatic rising and falling figures. There is a beautiful, tranquil passage, built up out of one of the earlier themes, that represents calm after a fierce hurricane, and then the exquisite melody of p. 137 soars up from the strings, with light scoring, in a metamorphosed three-four measure. The effect is one of magical loveliness, the verbal suggestion of the passage being—

> "There lived we many years
> Time dried the maiden's tears;
> She had forgot her fears."

The same theme is used when, after the maiden's death, men become hateful to the Viking, and goes

to intimate how he lives now merely on his reminiscences. There is a convulsive passage from the full orchestra depicting the hero's self-inflicted death, and then the "sea" subject takes command of the situation as if to typify that his soul is now afloat on the sea of Eternity.

### "*Ulalume*"—*No.* 3—(*Op.* 35).

The inspiration for Holbrooke's third orchestral poem was again derived from Poe's work, and in *Ulalume* he produced one of his most remarkable compositions. It was first performed at the Queen's Hall Symphony Concerts under the conductorship of Henry Wood, in 1905, and aroused a storm of conflicting opinions as to its merits.

Poe's beautiful poem is a gloomy one. The poet describes how once, through an alley Titanic, of cypress, he roamed with Psyche, his soul, on a night in lonesome October in the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir. There, at the end of their path, a "liquescent and nebulous lustre was born." The poet believes that this vision has come to point to "the Lethean peace of the skies," but Psyche is distrustful and wants to fly. The Poet, however, pacifies his Soul, and they follow the beaming of the tremulous light. They are stopped, however, at the door of a tomb upon which the name of the Poet's lost "Ulalume" is inscribed. It was here

on the same night of the previous year that he had journeyed with his dread burden to this "ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir."

The mystic nature of this poem is wonderfully realised in music, which is full of strange and elusive effects, eloquently emphasised by the subtle orchestral colouring. A dim haze pervades it, suggesting even more than it reveals, like the haze of a Corot picture. It is a splendid psychic drama in miniature, and, though it is quite easy to understand that it is not of a quality to appeal to all natures, yet, to those who can appreciate its imaginative significance, there is truly "magic in the web of it."

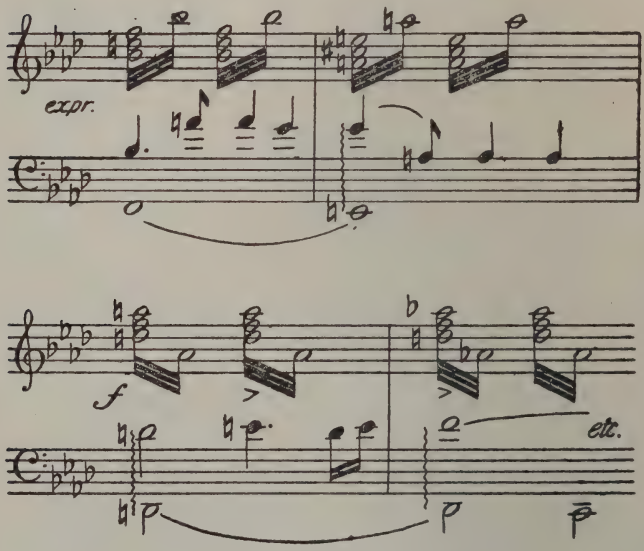
In the orchestra the following instruments are brought into play: Piccolo, 3 flutes, 2 oboes, cor-anglais, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 3 bassoons, 4 horns, 4 trumpets, 3 trombones, drums, triangle, cymbals, gong, harps and strings.

The opening of this orchestral poem contains one of the most exquisite bits of impressionism to be found in the whole realm of music. It is suggestive of "forests and enchantments drear," and the delicacy of the harmonies and the subtlety of the orchestration produce an unforgettable effect upon a mind subject to poetical influences. The atmosphere of Poe's verses is seized upon magnetically, and we are at once led into an eerie land of strange vision where normal things are alien and out of place. Shimmering chords from the strings combine with *arpeggios* from the harp, and, into the web of sound thus generated, the wood-wind

drops fragments of elusive melody. At the suggestion—

> "Here once through an alley Titanic
> Of cypress, I roamed with my soul"

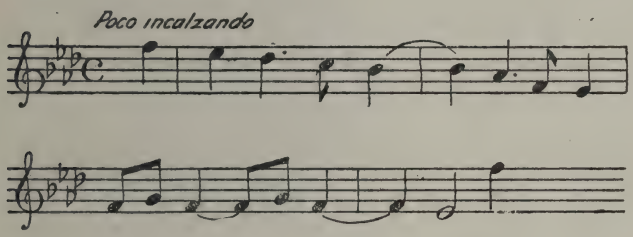
—we have a theme of supreme loveliness—




—in which 'cellos, horns and clarinets have the melody with main support from the strings.

Then the feeling grows more eruptive till a mournful little figure of three descending chromatic chords from the strings springs abruptly into the

limelight, followed by some weird successions of fifths from the horns. We then reach one of the most important subjects of the work—




This is of an unconventional pattern, and full of a nameless charm. It proceeds from the upper strings with a light filling in of harmonies by the other instruments, impetuous *arpeggios* from the wood-wind being especially conspicuous. Chromatic movements in contrary motion among the different parts then lead to a new subject illustrative of—

> "These were days when my heart was volcanic
> As the scoriac rivers that roll."

—where a series of chords, mainly from lower strings and brass, is followed by downward dashing groups of demi-semi-quavers from the flutes and oboes. These two suggestive ideas pervade the music for a considerable time with picturesque effect, finally dropping out to allow for the re-entry of the portentous little chromatic *motif* already men-

tioned divided between wood-wind, brass, and upper strings to emphasise the lines commencing—

> "But Psyche uplifting her finger
> Said 'Sadly this star I mistrust'"

Then, to depict—

> "Oh hasten! oh let us not linger
> Oh fly, let us fly for we must"

some iridescent harmonies from the strings, allied to an assertive subject from horns and trumpets, creates a very picturesque effect, which is superseded by the reappearance of the little chromatic *motif* to define the terror of Psyche "letting sink her wings till they trailed in the dust." After this, there is some working of previously heard ideas when a new subject is heard on the trumpets and surrounded by much sensitive harmonisation. The ensuing music deals with the appearance before the tomb, whilst Psyche's whispered words "Ulalume! Ulalume!" are suggested by the phraseology of the horns.

Soon, we have a return of the important subject of p. 143 to illustrate the lines commencing—

> "This is nothing but dreaming
> Let us on by this tremulous light"

—with different orchestral colouring. This goes through some effective developments and works up into a passage full of passionate emotion from the full orchestra to portray the agitated remembrance of the poet of his journey to the same spot the

previous year. The remainder of the work is also based upon the same theme, which becomes laden with a feeling of the profoundest grief until some wailing chromatic notes lead into a long-sustained hushed chord.

After *Ulalume*, it would appear that Holbrooke began to have doubts as to the thorough effectiveness of the purely orchestral poem as an art form. He recognised that, to a listener with a thorough knowledge of the subject on which a musical work was founded, that work gained an added vitality and interest, but he also recognised that, to the listener ignorant of its basic idea, it just lacked the necessary current to galvanise it into life. However strong such a composition might be from an aesthetic point of view, it was bound to suffer in the esteem of a very large number of people if they possessed no key to its significance. In his next three orchestral poems, then, he compromised. By adding voices to his scheme, he not merely indulged his own gift of tonal colouring, but he made his labours more generally comprehensible. The long Preludes of these three later poems may be said to be almost complete in themselves, and to reflect as faithfully the subject matter upon which they are founded as did the three earlier poems. They have this advantage, however. By means of the Prelude, the right atmospheric feeling is first generated, whilst the vocal section acts as a sort of interpreter to it by taking up its themes, and, by allying them to words, thus demonstrating their significance. The

Prelude plays much the same part with regard to the complete Poem as the Overture plays with regard to Opera, though, proportionally, it is much more important. It may be held that such a method of musical construction renders a work unduly long, and leads to much useless repetition; yet it should produce no greater feeling of tautology than the repetitions necessary to the sonata and rondo forms for instance. Good thematic material benefits by repetition, and is generally more often assured of a welcome on its second appearance than it is on its first. It is only when listening to repetitions from works of feeble inspiration that we are so often tempted to say, "Methinks you do protest too much!"

### *"Byron"—No. 4—(Op. 39).*

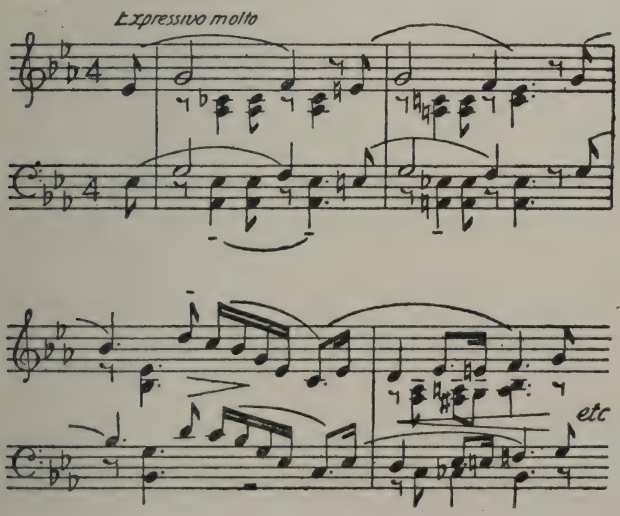
This work is the shortest, as it is also the least significant, of the orchestral poems. For once, the composer forsakes subjects of a picturesque quality and turns his attention to Keats' eulogistic sonnet on a brother poet. In this new *milieu,* Holbrooke is not so much at home. The work has its purple patches, but it also has certain suggestions of rhetoric that mar its complete success, and the vocal writing strikes one occasionally as being somewhat too tentative in character.

It was first performed by the Leeds Choral Union on the 7th of December, 1904, and is scored for 3 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns (or

8), 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, 1 tuba, tympani, gran cassa, harps and strings, whilst for performance with a chorus, the wood-wind may be increased at the discretion of the conductor.

The first subject of the Prelude is of a dignified character, and proceeds from horns and 'cellos. A little later we have the second subject from a portion of the upper strings, combined with staccato passages from the upper wood-wind, and a rambling motion from violas and bassoons.

Most of the orchestra is then brought into action, but the music that is evoked from this theme is not very interesting or convincing, though, technically, it is clever. We only begin to regain a grip of things with the entry of the third subject, a *cantabile* movement of exquisite beauty and deep feeling—



in which violins, violas and 'cellos have the melody, and trombones, bassoons and horns fill in the harmonies. If only the work were up to this level throughout, it would take much higher rank among the poems than it now occupies. This graceful and tender theme is again heard on the horn and bassoon combined, with musical ornamentation from the wood-wind, and then developments of it lead towards a restatement of the first theme in a more grandiose form. A metamorphosed version of the second theme follows, to merge later into the theme of p. 147, which now assumes a sportive and sprightly character that utterly changes its spirit but does not banish its charm. An optional ending to this Prelude is given for use when no voices are employed.

The choral part of the work commences with the full chorus ejaculating the name "Byron" three times. Then they proceed on their course—

> "Byron! how sweetly sad thy melody"

—to the first theme of the Prelude, whilst the first violins add some thematic embroidery to the vocal air and the lower strings are mainly occupied with *arpeggio* passages. The effect is pleasing, though the writing for the voices lacks freedom and is rather stilted in character. At the setting commencing—

> "O'ershadowing sorrow doth not make
> thee less delightful"

we feel a greater suppleness in the vocal outline, and there are some effective imitative passages, though, here, the orchestral subject owes its interest to treatment rather than to idea. There are a few suggestions of the subject of p. 147 in the key of C at the lines—

"Still warble dying swan! still tell the tale,"

the orchestral scoring being here of very light texture. The work terminates with a few *fortissimo* tonic chords, in which the upper strings are all silent.

Although this poem is uneven in inspiration, and occasionally degenerates into inexpressive and uninteresting rhythms, it has many moments of winsome loveliness that do much to atone for those passages where the invention appears to be flagging. It is not one of those works, however, that spring among the first to the mind when we recall the composer's creative achievements.

### "*Queen Mab*"—*No.* 5—(*Op.* 45).

*Queen Mab* was produced at the Leeds Festival of 1904. It is founded on certain lines borrowed from *Romeo and Juliet,* and is quite different in character from Holbrooke's other orchestral poems. It is particularly strong in fantasy, whilst the choral

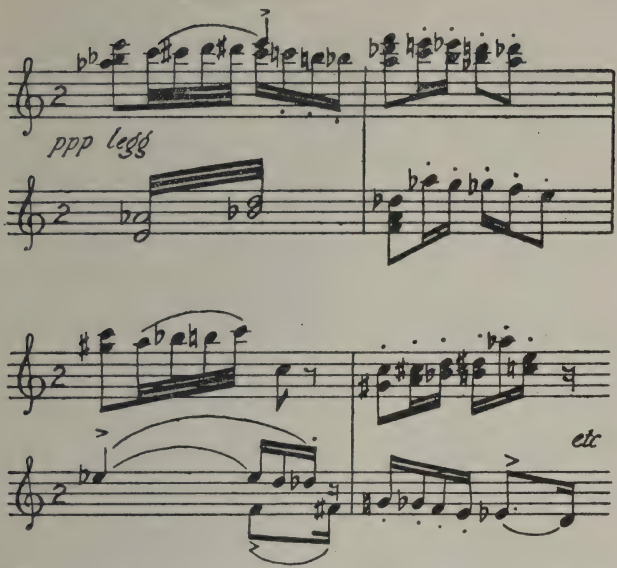
writing is much more effective than it is in *Byron*. The orchestral writing, too, is as graphic and full of colour as ever, the parts for wood-wind and brass being here of especial difficulty. The work has been often performed, and the reception accorded to it has always been a flattering one.

The orchestra employed is one of considerable dimensions: Flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, trumpets, tenor trombones, bells, xylophone, cymbals, drums, triangle and strings.

The first section of the work owes its existence to the following idea—

> "*Romeo:* I dreamt a dream to-night.
> *Mercutio:* And so did I.
> *Romeo:* Well, what was yours?
> *Mercutio:* That dreamers often lie."

Here, the number of orchestral instruments is cut down, and the strings open with a long *tremolo* passage on the notes forming the chord of the augmented fifth. Then the wood-wind and brass monopolise this idea in conjunction with fresh material from the strings. The whole has the elusive quality that we associate with a dream. Then we reach the chief subject of the movement, which is mainly allotted to wood-wind with supporting harmonies from the other instruments—



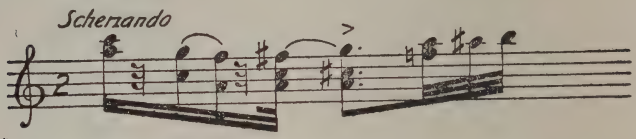

This is of a most delicate and fantastic character, and is very beautifully harmonised. It forms the most delightful portion of the work, and reflects for us the lines—

"*Romeo:* In bed asleep while they do dream things true.

*Mercutio:* O, then, I see Queen Mab hath been with you.
She is the Fairies' midwife; and she comes
In shape no bigger than an agate stone
On the forefinger of an alderman,
Drawn with a team of little atomies
Over men's noses as they lie asleep; etc."

The music then resolves itself into the following

figure, particularly characteristic of the Holbrooke of this date—

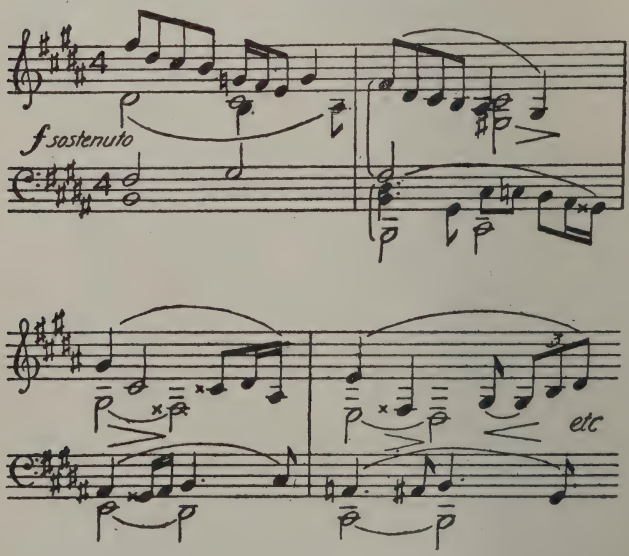



This becomes of particular importance in the choral part of the work, and now proceeds from the wood-wind, which plays the leading part in this charming and fairy-like movement.

The second part of the Prelude is an *adagio, con molto expressione* derived from the following idea—

> "And in this state, she gallops night by night
> Through lovers' brains, and then they dream of love; etc."

The "love" *motif* takes this form—



This issues mainly from the strings, the upper wood-wind dropping out of action for a time. Though the feeling is pleasant and sincere, it is not particularly fervent, though there is some increase in intensity at a later passage marked *poco allegretto*. The theme, however, makes a second appearance, when its interest is considerably enhanced by an accompanying shower of semiquavers from the wood-wind. Portions of it are also heard in combination with the fantastic theme of p. 151. After a few bars of animated writing, it again asserts itself in the full orchestra with majestic and imposing effect leading up gradually to the *Allegro marcia* section suggestive of the lines—

> "Sometimes she driveth o'er a soldier's neck,
> And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats,
> Of breaches ambuscades, Spanish blades
> . . . at which he starts and wakes;
> And being thus frighted; swears a prayer or two,
> And sleeps again, etc."

The chief material of this is a bold theme of stirring vitality partly evolved from the subject of p. 152 (No. 2), in which triplets play a characteristic part, and in which the full orchestra participates. Upon this is grafted a little two-bar *motif*, which becomes of considerable importance in the music that follows. These two subjects dominate the situation in a clever manner for a long time until the martial spirit is ousted by a quieter transitional *poco lento* section leading directly into a restatement in modified form of the theme of p.

152 (No. 2) from the strings. This prepares the way for the entry of the sopranos *adagio* with the same theme set to the well-known lines, beginning

"Arise fair sun and kill the envious moon."

Throughout this, one feels that the music makes better orchestral than it does vocal idiom. One does not like, for instance, the termination of the word "envious," in one place, on a high note, and the writing for voices generally lacks ease. The composer seems much more at home, however, in his extended setting of the line, "None but fools do wear it; cast it off," which follows, and here we have a new and piquant figure in the accompaniment from the strings, whilst the two subjects of p. 152 come in for some effective employment. As tenors and basses enunciate the word "Arise!" the full chorus prepares to re-enter with the line on which they started to the strains of the theme of p. 152 (No. 2), now given out *maestoso* in augmented form. Here it attains a fine dignity, and forms an eloquent climax to the vocal writing. A short section for full orchestra *allegro fuoco*, in which the little two-bar *motif* is prominent, then brings the work to a close.

Throughout the whole orchestral poem one is made aware of its many excellencies; but one is also bound to admit that its chief strength lies in its pictorial rather than in its emotional character. Its contrasts are numerous, and these are generally happy in conception, but the thing that chiefly attracts is the delightful spirit of fantasy that pervades so much of it.

### "*The Bells*"—*No.* 6—(*Op.* 50.).

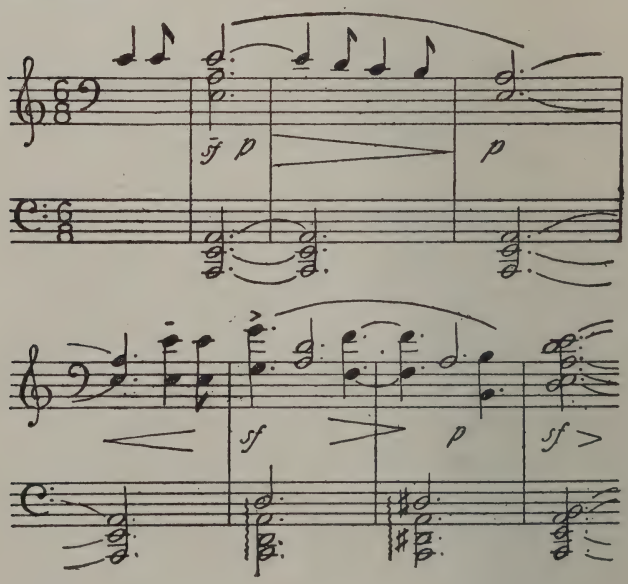
In his next orchestral poem Holbrooke reverted to his favourite poet, Poe, for his subject matter, and produced one of his most powerful and original works. The poem is divided into four parts, the first dealing with the merry jingling of sledge bells, the second with the swinging of rapturous, euphonious wedding bells, the third with the shrieking of turbulent alarum bells, and the fourth with the sobbing of solemn death bells and of the paean of joy among the ghouls that dwell up in the steeple.

The contrasts of feeling in this remarkable poem with its fine swaying rhythm offered Holbrooke a splendid opportunity for displaying his powerful gift of pictorial writing, and he has taken full advantage of it. This orchestral poem is a finely-poised piece of work, clear and dramatic, with a sharpness of outline, truth of detail and tonal suggestiveness that render it one of the greatest of British musical achievements.

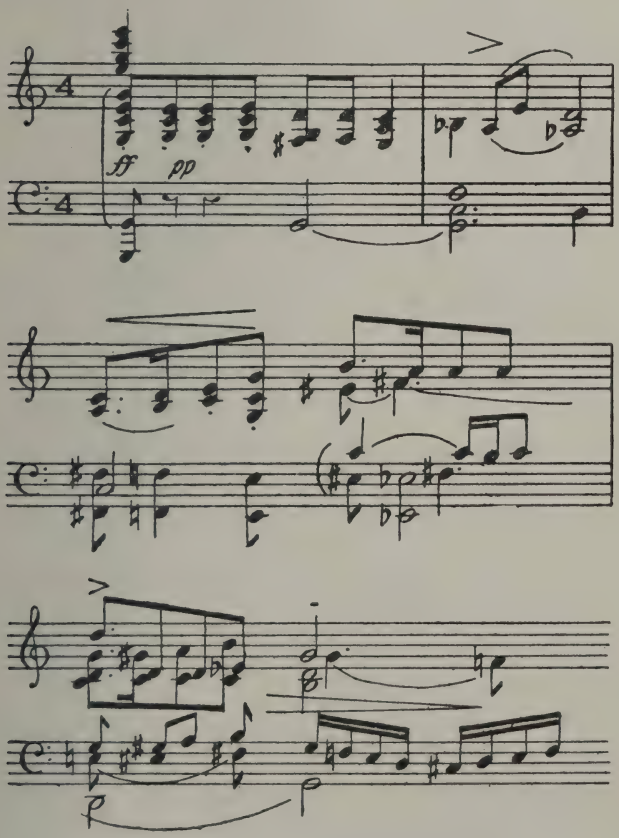
It was first performed at the Birmingham Musical Festival in 1906, but was completed as early as September, 1903. The orchestra employed is a large one—strings (60), 3 flutes, 1 piccolo, 2 clarinets, 1 bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 1 contra bassoon, 4 horns (8 if possible), 4 trumpets, 3 trombones, 1 contra bass tuba, 1 euphonium, 3 tympani, 1 big drum, 1 side drum, 1 tenor drum, 1 stier horn in B, large cymbals, small cymbals, 1 large gong, 1 small gong, 1 xylophone, tubular bells and 4 mushroom bells, 1 handbell in C, glockenspiel,

triangle, tambourine, large jingles, small jingles, soprano concertina, 2 harps, 2 grand pianofortes, and celesta, and where the wood-wind, strings, and euphonium can be increased, it is the wish of the composer that this should be done. The chorus desired is one from 300 to 500 voices.

The work opens with an instrumental Prelude in which most of the leading themes of the choral portion of the poem are introduced. Three sustained common chords of A minor (minus the third) for muted strings, most of the brass, harps, and some of the percussion instruments, lead into a theme allotted to the solo horn, to which the bassoons and other horns add their voices towards the close—



After a few bars, another important *motif* is heard on the strings, which, later on, is allied to the first subject. This, after fresh material, merges at length into a new melody of which the strings bear most of the burden and which re-appears in the choral section of the work, entitled "Wedding Bells."

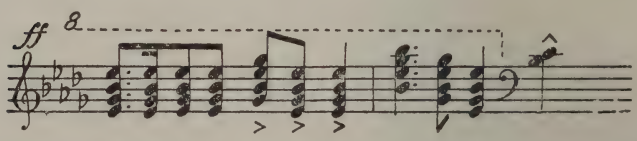


The music then proceeds towards a charming passage *poco lento* (*les oiseaux*) which, in the vocal portion of the poem, reflects the lines—

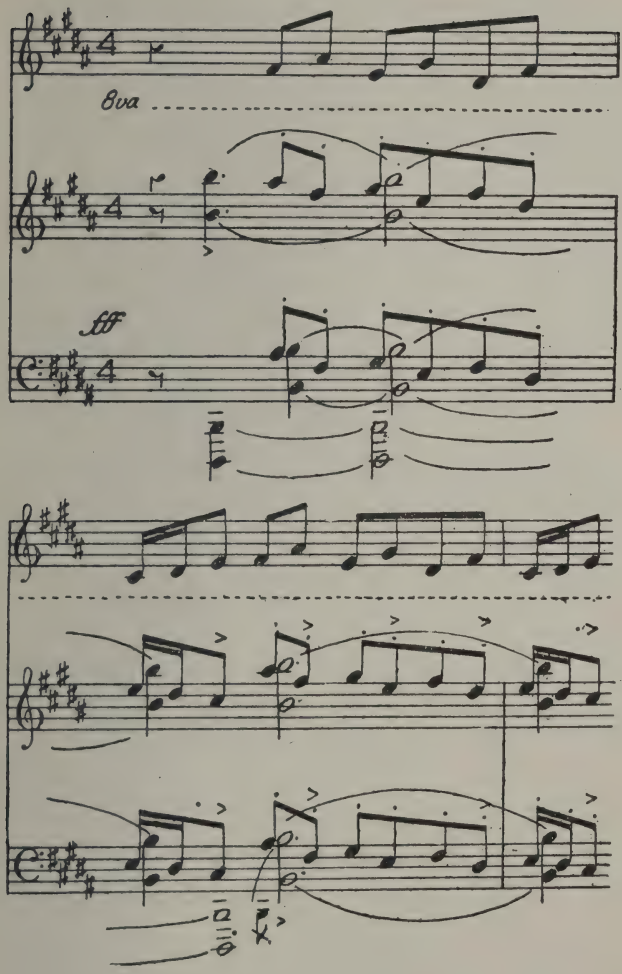
> "What a liquid ditty floats
> To the turtle-dove that listens while she gloats
> On the moon"

where a seductive melody on the strings is combined with a twittering subject from the wood-wind. It then yields place to a more animated figure from the wood-wind, which, after attaining an explosive energy, calms down into an eloquent passage descriptive of the swinging and ringing of the wedding bells. The concertina here makes an effective entrance.

At the close of this section of the Prelude we have some fresh matter again suggestive of the pealing of bells, which then ushers in the important theme which is later associated with the "Alarum bells"—




and is now introduced by the full orchestra. The utterance becomes more and more frenzied as subject yields place to subject, and at length works up to a breathless climax of wonderful dramatic intensity in which the tonal colouring is laid on in the richest hues. An impressive pause follows, after which we have a splendid passage representative of the clamour of jubilant swaying bells—


8va
ff

This commences *fff* from the full orchestra, and then the various instruments drop out of action one by one in order to effect a beautifully graduated *diminuendo* till the tone is reduced to a *pppp* chord for strings alone with which the Prelude impressively closes.

The first section of the choral part of the work—"*Sledge Bells*"—is largely concerned with the subject of p. 156, with which the sopranos enter at the line "Hear the sledges with the bells," and the scoring is full of picturesque quality.

A new and charming melody is introduced at the line "Keeping time, time, time in a sort of Runic rhyme," in which the major part of the wood-wind and string orchestra lightly participates. The percussion instruments also add their voices to create a very pleasing effect. At the end of this movement there is a short orchestral interlude *allegretto* (*poco vivace*), in which we get a reminder of the theme of p. 156 from the trumpets and a bell-like *motif* from the harp, after which the music passes into the second section of the work—"Wedding Bells."

Here the choral writing is for female voices only, and the theme of p. 157 is prominent. A little later we have the subject already noted in the Prelude, entitled "Les Oiseaux," and the effect is very happy and fascinating.

Another orchestral interlude cleverly founded on the same *bell-motif* that appeared in the preceding interlude, separates the second and third parts. As this music proceeds, the harmonies become more discordant, suggestive of "sweet bells jangled out

of tune and harsh," preparing us for the subject of the third section—"Alarum Bells." Here the chorus deliver the theme of p. 158 in eight-part harmony to the lines beginning "Hear the loud alarum bells, brazen bells," and the orchestral scoring is full of a barbaric splendour. At the lines—

> "In the startled ear of night
> How they scream out their affright!
> Too much horrified to speak"

the first of these is set *pp;* then we have an abrupt and frenzied transition to *ff* at the second, whilst the music droops to a hushed awe at the third. As the movement advances, the feeling grows more and more turbulent and dramatic, whilst great waves of sound surge up and down in the orchestra and create an overwhelming and terrifying effect. When this wild upheaval subsides, we have a new and tranquil melody at the lines "Now to sit or never by the side of the pale-faced moon," in which the orchestral scoring is very delicately tinted. Not for long, however, does this calm reign, for soon we are launched again on another sea of frenzied disturbance. A little later the re-appearance of the ubiquitous *motif* of p. 156 on the oboe heralds in an important new melody on the solo violin, from which the ensuing choral passage, commencing "How the danger sinks and swells," is built up. The music here takes on a richly polyphonic character, in which the vocal writing passes into eight-part harmony, and is upheld by a fine

contrapuntal movement from the orchestra into the fabric of which the theme of p. 156 is constantly and ingeniously interwoven. A transitional section for orchestra then leads up to the last part of the work—"Iron Bells."

The employment of men's voices alone during the early part of this (which is suggested by the theme of p. 158) gives a sombre colouring to the music, which is further emphasised by a mournful tolling from the bells. The effect is very impressive. When we come to the line descriptive of the people who dwell up in the steeple—

"They are ghouls"

this information it uttered quietly and fearfully, and preceded by a pause and then followed by a bar's silence from all the orchestral instruments, save the 'cellos and contra basses, which have a few chromatic descending notes leading into a short dramatic instrumental interlude. The voices again take up the burden at the line "And their king it is who tolls," supported by some sportive material in the orchestra. This develops into a scene of antic revelry of a most powerful and dramatic character, which finally yields place to a subject that did service in the first vocal section to the same words, "Keeping time, time, time in a sort of Runic rhyme." There is a very beautiful passage commencing with the words "To the sobbing of the bells," in which the vocal writing begins in five parts, and the harmony gradually thickens until it reaches seven parts. Around this the orchestra

weaves an eloquent musical pattern. The music then proceeds towards a powerful climax in which the full orchestra participates. It then droops to a quieter and more placid mood at the line "To the moaning and the groaning of the bells," and the work closes with a few bars borrowed from the opening bars of the Prelude melting into a major chord.

The choral writing of this work generally is greatly in advance of that of the two earlier orchestral poems in which voices were employed. We are never conscious in *The Bells,* as we were occasionally in *Queen Mab* and *Byron,* of any awkwardness in the vocal phraseology, but poetry and music move along together in perfect accord. Poe's verses are finely rhythmic, but it is not going too far to assert that their vivid dramatic qualities gain a fresh lustre from the glowing sincerity of Holbrooke's music.

### *The Song of Gwyn ap Nudd (Pianoforte Concerto) No. 7 (Op. 52).*

Some of the composer's finest work owes its genesis to old Welsh legends rendered into verse by T. E. Ellis (Lord Howard de Walden). These include the powerful trilogy of operas, to be discussed later in the volume, and a pianoforte concerto or Poem for piano and orchestra, *The Song of Gwyn ap Nudd.*

The legends concerning Gwyn ap Nudd, the

King of Faerie, are many, and we become acquainted with some of these in the poems of Davydd ap Gwylim, the Welsh poet for whom George Borrow had so great an admiration. The legend upon which T. E. Ellis has based his verses is the one which represents Gwyn ap Nudd as the lover of Cordelia, the daughter of Ludd or Lear, for whom he fights with Gwythyr mab. Greidawl on every first of May till the day of doom.

To many composers such a subject would have suggested music of a weird, nebulous quality that brought the supernatural nature of the story into chief prominence. Not so Holbrooke, however! He is chiefly concerned with the psychology of the protagonists of the drama—the martial ardour of Gwyn and the womanly gracefulness and beauty of Cordelia. Of course, we have suggestions of the more fantastic side of the legend, but these are subsidiary to the main conception.

Regarded as a work in concerto form, the composition is remarkably free. For this, the story on which it is founded is mainly responsible. The composer, in this concerto, exercises his supreme power of pictorial suggestion to its fullest extent, and naturally strictness of form has to be sacrified to a large degree. The music is some of the most entrancing and romantic that Holbrooke has ever conceived, and in total contrast to *The Bells*. It is broad in conception and overflowing with noble and uplifting themes. When we listen to it, we feel that here is music that is no mere gleaming of a pale luminosity, but music glowing with white-

hot intensity, pregnant with idea and magnificent in technique.

It is scored for piccolos, flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, trumpets, trombones, tuba, drums, cymbals and strings, and is divided into three movements which merge into each other, though optional endings to each movement are also given.

The first movement opens *maestoso allegro* in common time, with a vigorous introductory passage for strings, wood-wind and horns, descriptive of the lines—

> "Open the gate of mirrored horn!
> Summon the hosts of pool and lawn,
> Sprites of the mist and marshland born,
> Flower-bred fays and the phantom spawn
> Of sward and leaf and shade!"

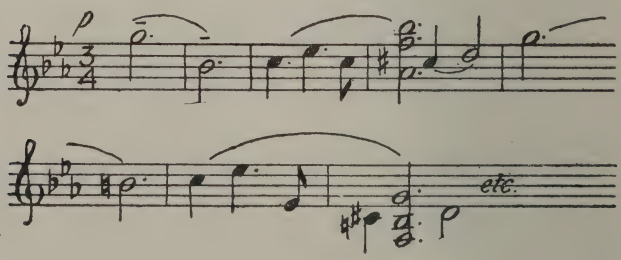
This is followed by a cascade of octaves for the solo instrument that leads directly into the statement by the full orchestra of the first subject in F minor, a bold, martial theme of much character and grit. This is then repeated by the piano with a tremolo support from the strings. After a few bars rest, the solo instrument starts off with what may be considered as a prolonged bridge-passage with a well-marked rhythmic theme. During this transitional movement, we have some new and important musical material.

The second subject, a *poco animato* in B flat, is of a *cantabile* character, and has much grace and beauty, the music rising and falling in expressive

outlines and attaining to considerable intensity of mood. The orchestra then repeats it against a background of upward and downward leaping groups of semi-quavers from the piano.

The development portion of the movement is well achieved, and there is often a masterly interlacing of themes. In the recapitulation we have the re-delivery of the first subject by the solo instrument. The bridge-passage follows an orthodox course, though with some changes in orchestral colouring and contrapuntal matter, and the second subject re-appears in the piano part in the tonic key of the movement, according to precedent. There is a long *Coda* introducing new themes, by means of which the movement is brought to a strenuous and impressive close.

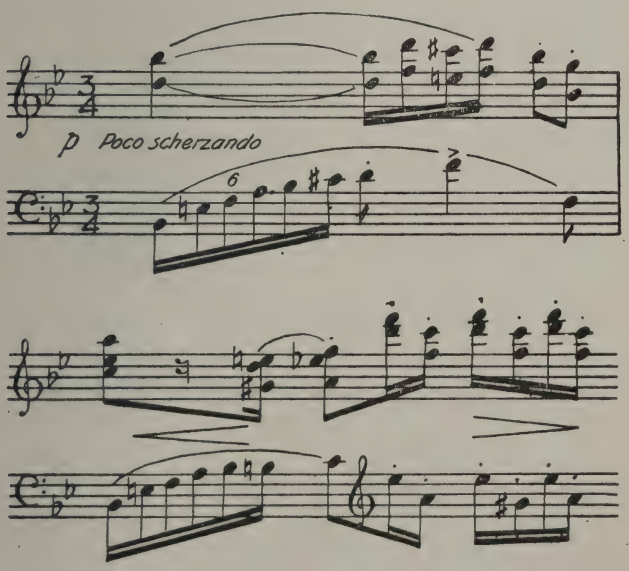
The second movement, an *adagio con sostenuto* in three-four time, in the key of E flat, depicts for us the beauty and charm of Cordelia. It opens with a few bars for a portion of the wood-wind and horns. Immediately afterwards the piano delivers a beautiful *cantabile* theme, almost Schumannesque in quality, whose tender gracefulness haunts the memory long afterwards—



The orchestra is then employed with a few ideas drawn from this theme, after which the piano continues its stream of melody, lightly accompanied by little ejaculations from the main body of the orchestra. In illustration of the lines—

> "Clotted of shadows he comes to my hest
> A fiery eyed phantom. The dream lists are dressed
> And peopled of spectres."

the piano introduces a new subject *poco allegretto e scherzando* in B flat, a fascinating movement full of elfish fantasy—



The orchestral writing here is of a light and gossamer quality.

The last section, an *allegro, molto fuoco,* in two-four time, in the key of F minor, shows wonderful orchestral technique and colouring. It opens with a riotous introduction, in which the full orchestra is employed, descriptive of the lines—

> "Blade that meets blade with never a sound
> Horses that shall leave not a print on the ground."

This merges into the presentation of a bold and martial first subject by the piano *ff fuoco.* This blood-stirring, vigorous theme obtains still further emphasis on its immediate repetition by the strings, supported by the full orchestra.

The second subject is a *Poco Larghetto* in the key of C. This is allotted to the solo instrument, and passes through many different keys. Part of it is then repeated by the orchestra, and surrounded with lace-like arabesques and a precipitous octave descent and ascent from the piano. The development portion of the movement is very short, and is evolved out of certain bars of the second subject. The recapitulation section shows some modification of the thematic matter and varied orchestral treatment. There is a long *Coda,* at the close of which the finely-conceived melody that forms the second subject of the opening movement is reintroduced with puissant effect by upper strings and flutes, and supported by the rest of the orchestra and by massive descending and ascending *arpeggio* chords from the piano.

The volume of tone thus built up gives eloquent and grandiose expression to the lines—

> "She was the most splendid maiden in the three islands
> Of the mighty and the three isles adjacent"

and forms a magnificent peroration to a really remarkable work. Its difficulties are many, and its thematic fabric is of very great complication. Technical proficiency, however, can exist apart from that great rarity—creative genius. Here. however, we have both in combination, and, whereas the cleverness of construction displayed in this work is apparent on a mere glance at the score, the thing that chiefly impresses one, in listening to it, is its super-abundant vitality, its spaciousness, its imaginative poetical spirit, its glowing picturesqueness, and the general unity of design in which it has been conceived.

. . . . . .

These orchestral poems of Holbrooke's are among the highest achievements of English musical history; yet how rarely they are performed in comparison with the works of the foreigner! The British public still retains its sober, enslaving respect for many of the musical platitudes of the past, accounting such an ingrained feeling the hall mark sign of its impeccable taste, or else it rushes to the other extreme and flings itself in unquestioning homage before the latest fashionable apostles of extreme modernism. Fashion! How much

that word has to account for! Watch the faces of its many votaries, and read the silent but willing martyrdom of the large majority. Watch, for instance, the faces of some of the people at our musical festivals! With Lady Macbeth, we could say, "Your face is as a book where men may read strange matters." Utter boredom or a mere artificial interest, in many cases, is all we read. They are merely there to be *au fait* with all the objects of enthusiasm (but more often pseudo-enthusiasm) of the modern world. To confess that one has not heard the performance of a work of which all one's acquaintance are talking and discussing is to be "outside the pale." For this reason they wear the hair shirt and sacrifice their natural inclinations. Naturally, concert promoters pander to these British "faddisms," for the box office must nearly always be their main concern, but, in the process, genuine art suffers grievously. Still, it is well not to be pessimistic in a world that has recently been witnessing such vast upheavals. Time often works wonders undreamed of in our philosophy! May it eventually work one in the musical perceptions of this England of ours!

# CHAPTER VIII

## SYMPHONIES

Op. 48, Choral Dramatic Symphony.
Op. 51, Apollo and the Seaman.

VERY similar in their character to the poems described in the preceding chapter are the two works that the composer has chosen to nominate as "symphonies." Of these, the *Choral Dramatic Symphony* (Homage to E. A. Poe) is in four movements, and each separate movement is founded on a separate poem of Edgar Allan Poe's. The respective titles of these different poems are as follows:—

(1) The Haunted Palace,
(2) Hymn,
(3) The City in the Sea,
(4) The Valley Nis,

and each of them has been chorally set in its completeness. Only the first and fourth movements of this symphony have orchestral preludes of any considerable extent preceding the vocal sections. The music derives its form from the verbal exigences of the respective poems, and consequently, in considering the work, one has to cast aside all ideas of classical symphonic structure, and to regard it as a group of orchestral poems whose aggregation brings it loosely into line with other works similarly designated merely by reason of the conventional four movement character that it possesses. *Apollo and the Seaman,* however, follows the symphonic form much more consistently.

The music of the *Dramatic Choral Symphony* shows much of that vivid, picturesque grasp of subject that the composer's other settings of Poe's poetry display. It was commenced in 1902 and completed in 1908, and had its first public performance by the Leeds Choral Union on the twelfth of November, 1908, conducted by the composer. It is remarkably rich in bold, rhythmic melody, though the quality of this is not quite so distinguished as it is in some of the composer's other orchestral works. Its tonality is strongly and clearly defined, and there is none of that vague meandering about among indefinite keys so reminiscent of a spirit seeking vainly for rest, to which so many modern composers are addicted. It bespeaks itself, indeed, as the work of a man who revels in travelling along strange, imaginative courses, but not of one whose methods are in any wise experimental or unregu-

lated. The music, too, in spite of its occasional uncanny quality, is both healthy and sane. Its very boldness saves it from the reproach of being designated as morbid in fancy. Fantastic it may be, but fantasy is a legitimate generator of art. The orchestral painting excellently realises for us the subjects of the poems, and the many beauties of tonal effect that the composer achieves in this work show how quick his brain is to conceive the aesthetic effect of certain instrumental combinations. It is only on very rare occasions, in his music, that he lapses into mere noise or is guilty of writing ugly passages, though, as we have seen, he has not always been clear of that offence. How much more often, however, does Richard Strauss, the composer to whom Holbrooke has so often been compared, deserve censure in this respect!

The choral writing of this work is not so good as the instrumental, and it has not the strength that was observable in the vocal portion of *The Bells*.

The poem, *The Haunted Palace*, upon which the first movement of this *Dramatic Choral Symphony* is based, is taken from a prose work of Poe's, entitled *The House of Usher*. In this, the poet describes how he has received a letter from a friend of his, Roderick Usher by name, in which he speaks of a mental disorder which is depressing him, and begs the person whom he addresses to come on a visit to him with the view of alleviating his malady. Accordingly, the poet sets out towards

his friend's dwelling-place, but, as he reaches it, the gloominess of the place fills him with superstitious fears. A peculiar atmosphere appears to pervade it that he cannot account for—"an atmosphere which had no affinity with the air of heaven, but which had reeked up from the decayed trees, and the grey wall, and the silent tarn—a pestilent and mystic vapour, dull, sluggish, faintly discernible and leaden-hued." Summoning up courage, however, he enters the house and meets his friend, whom he finds nervous and excitable, with alternations of vivaciousness and of sullenness. He discovers that one of Usher's diversions is to accompany certain rhymed verbal improvisations of his own upon the guitar, and, among these, is the poem of *The Haunted Palace,* in which, as the poet says, he first perceived "a full consciousness on the part of Usher of the tottering of his lofty reason upon her throne." The poem is short, and I append it in full:

I

In the greenest of our valleys
  By good angels tenanted
Once a fair and stately palace—
  Radiant palace reared its head.
In the monarch Thought's dominion—
  It stood there!
Never seraph spread a pinion
  Over fabric half so fair.

II

Banners, yellow, glorious, golden,
  On its roof did float and flow;
(This—all this—was in the olden
  Time long ago);
And every gentle air that dallied,
  In that sweet day,
Along the ramparts plumed and pallid,
  A wingèd odour went away.

III

Wanderers in that happy valley,
  Through two luminous windows, saw
Spirits moving musically
  To a lute's well tunéd law,
Round about a throne where, sitting
  (Porphyrogene!)
In state his glory well befitting,
  The ruler of the realm was seen.

IV

And all with pearl and ruby glowing
  Was the fair palace door,
Through which came flowing, flowing, flowing,
  And sparkling evermore,
A troop of Echoes, whose sweet duty
  Was but to sing,
In voices of surpassing beauty,
  The wit and wisdom of their king.

V

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,
  Assailed the monarch's high estate;
(Ah, let us mourn! for never morrow
    Shall dawn upon him desolate!)

And round about his home the glory
  That blushed and bloomed
Is but a dim-remembered story
  Of the old time entombed.

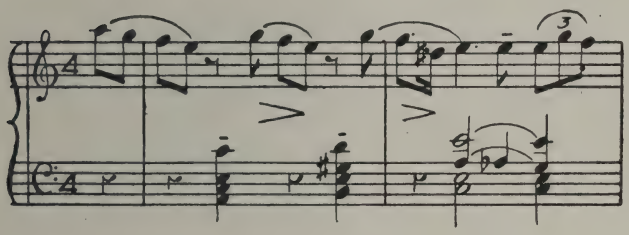
VI

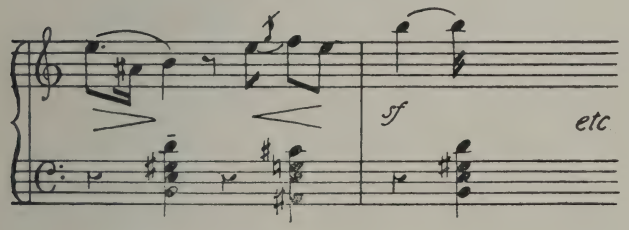
And travellers now, within that valley,
  Through the red-litten windows see
Vast forms that move fantastically
  To a discordant melody;
While, like a rapid ghastly river,
  Through the pale door
A hideous throng rush out for ever,
  And laugh—but smile no more.

It is the number of pictorial allusions in this terrible poem less than the psychological state of the man that Holbrooke has defined in the first movement of his symphony. Perhaps it is well that he has dealt with the allegorical side of his subject rather than with its inner side, or the result might have been too acutely painful. The work is scored for an orchestra of two flutes, piccolo, two oboes, cor-anglais, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contra-bassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, contra-bass tuba, three tympani, side-drum, bass-drum, triangle, tambourine, cymbals, gongs (small) harps, and strings. The chorus should be from two hundred to five hundred in number.

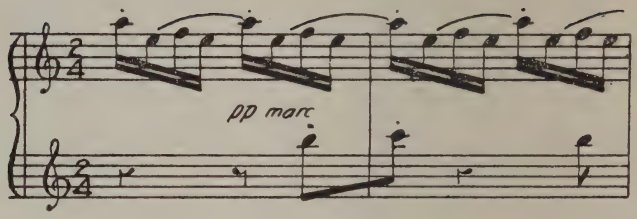
The first movement opens with an important orchestral prelude.

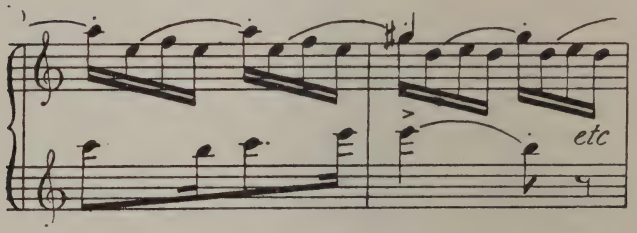
After a few bars of introductory matter, we have the first theme from the oboes, accompanied by horns, trombones, and bass tuba—






this being followed by a weirdly expressive subject, which, after working up to a wild climax full of eerie suggestions, relaxes its tension to yield place to a new subject, announced *presto vivacissimo e molto leggiero*—




When, later, the voices enter, the violas and 'cellos have a swaying rhythmic movement by way of accompaniment.

The purely orchestral prelude is by far the best portion of the movement, and here we find the composer in one of his most delightful and picturesque moods. This is arranged for separate performance, and, even apart from its programmic derivation, it has very definite and decided charm. The vocal writing, though interesting, has no great distinction.

The second movement of this Symphony is very short, and is founded upon a simple hymn to the Virgin. It represents the slow movement of the work, and is designed for tenors and baritones only.

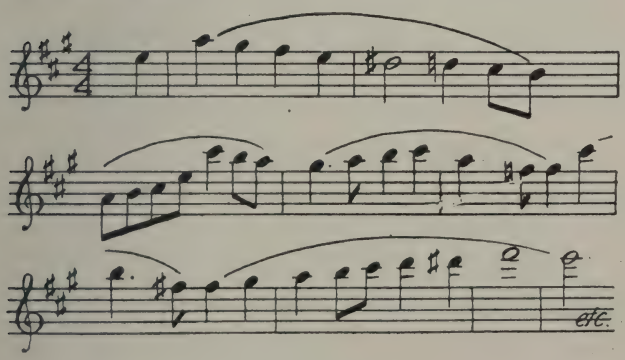
The strings are all muted, and the only wood-wind instruments used are bassoons. The feeling is very peaceful, heartfelt, and beautiful.

*The City in the Sea,* the poem upon which the third movement of this symphony is founded, is a weird and dismal thing telling of a city down within the dim West where Death has reared himself a throne. Around it, hideously serene and melancholy waters lie—

> "No rays from the holy heaven came down
> On the long night-time of the town;
> But light from out the lurid sea
> Streams up the turrets silently."

From the proud tower of this city, Death looks gigantically down.

A short instrumental prelude introduces the vocal portion of the movement, and it contains a theme, *moderato misterioso,* which becomes of great importance later—



This is given out by strings. The ensuing solo for bass voice is broad and vigorous in character, with a wave-like movement from the orchestra, whilst the setting of the lines—

> "Not the gaily jewelled dead
> Tempt the waters from their bed;
> For no ripples curl, alas!
> Along that wilderness of glass
> No swellings tell that winds may be
> Upon some far off happier sea."

which come later, and in which all the voices are divided, is particularly noticeable for its wild, weird beauty. The short orchestral interlude that succeeds has an important theme which, later, is taken up by the basses to the lines—

> "But lo, a stir is in the air!
> The wave—there is a movement there,"

in combination with a triplet figure from the orchestra. Out of this theme a very elaborate and cleverly-devised fugue is built up.

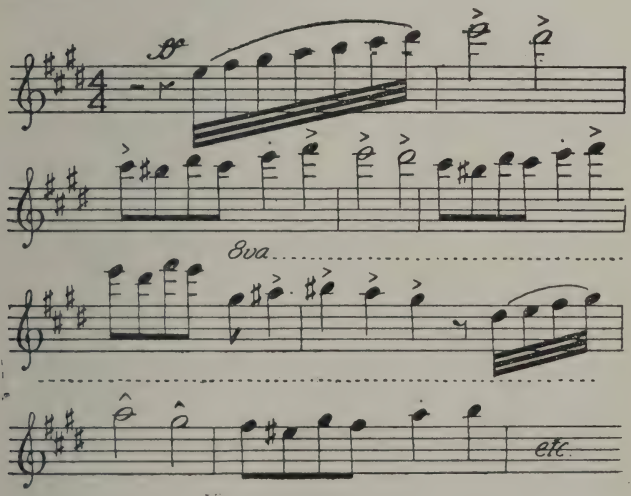
This movement is vastly superior vocally to either of the sections that preceded it, not only in the cleverness of its technique, but also in the beauty of its thematic material and in the variety of its harmonic colouring. Many parts of it rank with the composer's most inspired work, and many parts of it are also of extreme difficulty for the singers.

The fourth and last movement of this Symphony,

*The Valley Nis,* is based upon a poem that tells of a spot, concerning which—

> "A Syriac tale there is
> Thereabout which Time hath said
> Shall not be interpreted.
> Something about Satan's dart—
> Something about angel wings—
> Much about a broken heart—
> All about unhappy things:
> But 'the Valley Nis' at best
> Means 'the valley of unrest.'"

The vocal part of the movement is preceded by a prelude of considerable length which opens *maestoso allegro marziale,* with the following melodic theme from the flutes, oboes, clarinets, violins and violas—



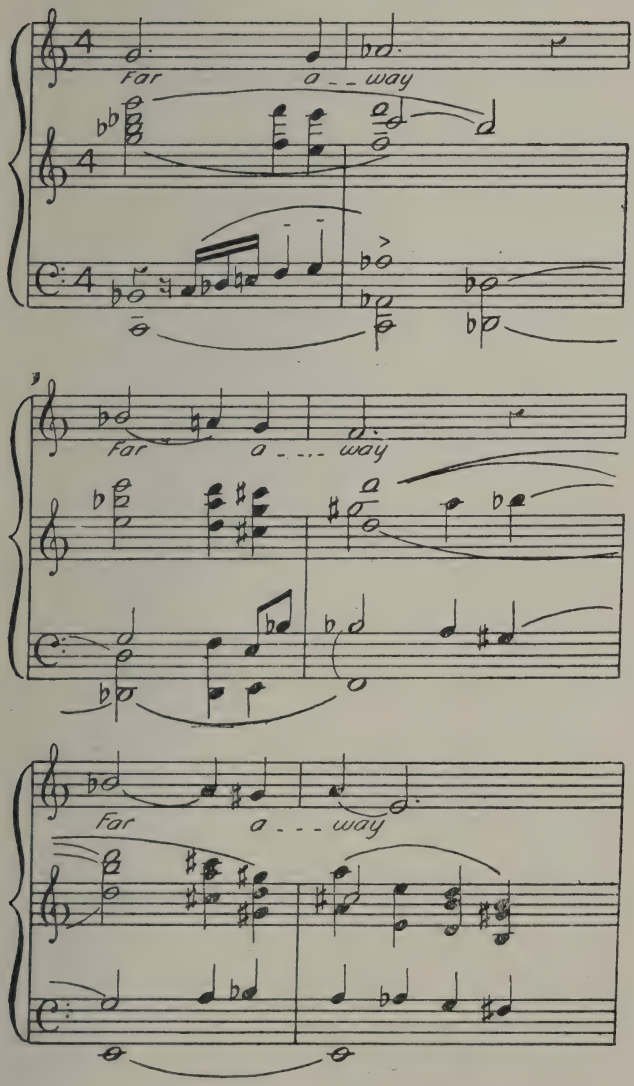
accompanied by the remainder of the orchestra, with full harmonic effects, and the music proceeds in boldly rhythmic fashion until a new subject of wistful character is announced by the first violins in the key of C major. This becomes of great importance later, and serves to illustrate the lines beginning—

"All about unhappy things"

Further on, this prelude merges into the vocal portion of the movement. Here, at the start, only a semi-chorus is employed, which, according to the composer's instructions, should number about 159 voices only. This chorus is divided into the usual four parts, soprano, alto, tenor and bass, and they enter on the lines—

"Far away—far away,
Far away—as far at least
Lies that valley as the day
Down within the golden east"

which are set to soft and rather dismal strains and harmonies that give one a curious sense of desolation and remoteness—


Far a - - way
Far a - - - way
Far a - - - way

The orchestral accompaniment of the above quoted bars is given to the strings alone, though the trumpets and flutes enter a little later. The vocal writing, generally, however, is again less convincing than the orchestral, and the chief interest in the music that follows is to be found in a purely instrumental interlude. This is succeeded by a quartet for solo voices in E major, in which the musical flow is graceful and easy. The full chorus enter with the soloists at the lines—

> "Now the unhappy shall confess
> Nothing there is motionless, etc."

Here, the vocal writing is in eight parts, and is finely achieved. With the entry of the last verse of the poem, there is a new theme of a march-like nature for sopranos that gradually becomes more and more dramatic as it progresses.

In spite of much splendid and vigorous music that this portion of the work contains, it does not fit in quite so happily with the basic poetical ideas as most of the composer's work of this class generally does. It is cleverly written, but it is less pictorial and vivid. In some places, the vocal phrases are stilted in their framework, whilst, in others, the musical feeling seems to be rather remote from the spirit of the words. The end, however, is finely conceived, and obliterates much of the sense of disappointment that some of the preceding matter had aroused. The third movement is undoubtedly the best part of the work, and the symphony, generally, though uneven in quality, has many splendid moments.

*Apollo and the Seaman* realises its title as a "symphony" much better than *The Choral Dramatic Symphony* does. At least, there is, here, some attempt to follow out the classic form which is scarcely observable in the latter work. *Apollo and the Seaman* is founded upon a poem by Herbert Trench, an Irish writer, who is also responsible for the verses of a set of Holbrooke's songs. Regarding this poem, the composer has said, "When I read *Apollo and the Seaman,* I was greatly struck with it, and I told the author so, adding that there were certain parts of it which appealed to me very strongly as a musician, and I should like to use it as the basis of a dramatic symphony." The poem was of very considerable length, however, and it was therefore impossible to treat it in the detailed, consecutive manner in which so many of the composer's previous poems had been treated. Holbrooke's music was compiled, therefore, with the object of illustrating its more salient features, and of giving a broad epitome of it in tone. The length of the choral portion of the work, when contrasted with that of the purely orchestral portion, is proportionally very much less than in either *The Bells* or *Queen Mab.* The poem is divided into eight sections, and only the last of these is dealt with chorally. The earlier part of the poem is defined in instrumental music alone, and it is divided into movements that follow the conventional symphonic form fairly consistently. It was easier to do that in this case than it was in the case of the symphony previously analysed. In *Apollo and the*

*Seaman* there was nothing to prevent the composer from utilising what portions of the poem he pleased, nor was he bound, either, by any hard and fast rules as to the order in which they were to be presented. He could fit them at will to suit the symphonic shape that he had in view, whilst some details of his subject might even be passed over altogether. Still, certain lines of the poem that appeared to him of a particularly striking nature have appealed to his pictorial sense, and have been illustrated in his music so as to effect the fabric of it to a very considerable extent. In the *Dramatic Choral Symphony*, however, the freedom was much less complete. There, as we have seen, the *whole* of each poem belonging to each separate movement was given to the chorus, so that the form of the work was entirely dependent upon the order of the poetical ideas.

The poem of *Apollo and the Seaman* deals with the great subject of immortality, and this is treated in allegorical fashion and has a moral to point. Its *first section* tells how Apollo mysteriously comes to earth "furred like a merchant fine," and seeks an inn on the sea-coast, where He sits with a Sailor, sharing a jug of wine. In the *second section* these two begin to converse together, and Apollo asks the Sailor why he appears to be so cast down. The reason is given in the Sailor's reply—

> "I heard them calling in the streets
> That the ship I serve upon—
> The great ship Immortality
> Was gone down like the Sun."

The *third section* is occupied with the queries made to the Sailor by Apollo concerning this ship. The Seaman then goes on to appraise the vessel on which he has served. Apollo affects to have seen far greater marvels of a similar nature, and cites certain triremes and galleons of ancient Greek history as cases to the point, but receives for reply—

> "Well—ask all navies such as these—
> Was she not more divine
> Who, challenged by Death's muffled drums,
> Gave Death the countersign."

Apollo then asks the Seaman the build of this boat of his, and this section of the poem concludes as follows—

> *Seaman:* "Oh her stretch of sail so white, so white,
> By no man's hand unfurled
> Was Heaven!
> *Apollo:* And the decks you kept so bright?
> *Seaman:* Were like the bustling world
> *Apollo:* And the hold and cockpit out of sight,
> Pitch dark and ill to smell,
> Full of the friends of your delight?
> *Seaman:* That was the pit of Hell!"

In the *fourth section,* the Seaman begins to speculate upon the causes that have made his vessel founder, and Apollo tells him—

> "Her end was none, my lad, of these;
> But first if you must know,
> Mutiny of those friends of yours
> In irons down below"

He then amazes the Sailor by the further information that he has to impart—

> "Nay, he that built your famous boat
> From the old coasts to fly
> And bear you ever out and on,
> Was I, and none but I"

The *fifth section* is concerned with the tale of Apollo regarding the ship. In an exquisite poetical passage, He tells how, having heard strange rumours, He had approached the boat, "triple-tier'd of Heaven and Earth and Hell" to find her sails "hung pierced and slung awry." From the forge doors in her decks had come insolent uproars until soon unkennelled Hell was loose and was swarming in escalade.

Then the God had inspected the faces of those that swarmed about him, and mused, "*Why need the dead survive?*" Finally, He had summoned up each soul, and round its neck securely fastened this token, "*Judge thyself.*" After this, to quote his own words—

> "Then from ocean's frothy hazardous
> Dream-element I caught
> Her crew—every half-foundered soul
> Wherewith her hold was fraught;
> And I sang them back to steady earth
> After their wanderings long,
> Both quick and dead. Hangs on thy breast
> The token of my song."

The Seaman fumbles at his breast, to find, indeed, that this token "*Judge thyself*" hangs there as stated, and then Apollo proceeds with the narration of how, after the horrible scenes that He had witnessed, He had smitten "the great hull to a ghost and the mighty masts to air." Still, He adds—

> "At hours when you are fever-struck
> A phantom you may see
> Derelict—drifting out of hail—
> Lost Immortality."

In the *sixth section*, the Seaman, in anger, rebukes the God for giving mankind only the earth as a substitute for the ship that has been destroyed, and Apollo, in turn, chides his companion for his lack of faith. He proceeds to tell him that a divine plan pervades the whole work of creation.

The Seaman asks, "Must we, ever-living one, go out when we are dead?"

The answer is given in the succeeding *seventh section*. The God says—

> "See, from the voyage whence you come now
> You come not back the same;
> Behind the door of your dull brow
> Hath sprung up doubt and blame—
> Defiance of me."

and then goes on to inform him that he is already on a cruise, with the Earth, however, for the ship, and that he will have time to find the Earth his

friend. No longer is he floating on his old vessel upon a sea of time among the fallen angels with the bitter sense of a Paradise lost, but on a vessel whose first voyagers were those of the Garden of Eden, and whose descendants still journey along the same course as their forefathers did, though with a richer understanding of the Divine Cosmos and a fuller revelation of the evolutionary principles that urge forward the development of mankind. The Seaman asks Apollo if there is a hand upon the helm of this new ship—the Earth—and the God cites the many marvels of natural phenomena in reply. He continues—

> "But if thy former priestly ship
> Failed of the port assigned,
> The overwhelming globe takes on
> Her altar-flame of mind.
> See that the oils that feed the lamp
> Fail not!"

The Seaman asks what those oils are, and is told "Heroic, warm abounding souls!" and also obtains some hint from the God of the evolutionary development of a race's organs of understanding. The Seaman still dreads lest immortality has become a lost heritage however, and demands further information. Apollo answers that he will tell him, "but as music tells," and questions him as to whether he has a son, to which he receives an affirmative reply. "And never yet hast guessed that thou and he art one!" the God ejaculates, and

forthwith proceeds to speak the lines in which the chief philosophy of the poem is compressed—

> "Between you—*between all that love*
> Runs no gulf wide nor deep,
> But a sheen'd veil, thinner than any veil,
> Thin as the veil of sleep
> Through the death-veil—looming silverly—
> Through the self-veil's subtle strand;
> Before its seeing rock-walls melt
> And cracks the mortal band.
> For when once the whole consummate strength
> Of thy slow-kindling mind
> Can see in the *heart's* light at length
> All the strange sons of mankind,
> Then the Earth—that else were but a strait
> Rock sepulcre—is new:
> Of what account to it is death?
> It is glowing through and through,
> It moveth, alive with a God's breath,
> Translucent as the dew."

*The eighth and last section* of the work is the only portion that Holbrooke has elected to treat chorally, and it describes the effect of the earth's aspect and of the sight of his own son upon the Seaman in the light of the new knowledge that has been revealed to him.

It must be acknowledged that Holbrooke had a very noble subject in this poem to work upon. The topic of immortality must always be of great interest to Christian and to Pagan alike. To the believer, his trust leads him to the assurance that all his highest ideals will one day be realised. Even the Pagan has some dim feeling of the imperishable

nature of spirit and thought as his many superstitions go to show. However elementary his views, too, upon the mysteries of time and space may be, these lead him to the acknowledgment of some Higher Control in the directing of the nature forces and of an eternity which, at the same time, he is unable to explain. This subjection to an incomprehensible Ruler and Creator led the Pagan Worshipper to credit Him with all his own cherished ideals of strength, beauty, passion and power. There was some active superhuman Force at work in the Universe—some Being that transcended the limitations imposed upon puny man—and each race had to explain It as best it could. The leading ideals of different nations, however, were generally quite distinctive, and, to this cause, we owe the many and varied conceptions of the Godhead that we encounter in the rusticity of the Scandinavian, the gracefulness of the Grecian, and the fanaticism of the Brahministic mythologies. As Carlyle once said, "Worship is transcendent wonder," and the untutored ages, in reverence of the marvels of the Universe, often mistook the subjective activities of nature for objective activities, and expressed their fealty by deifying the visible emblem. And whether we are Christians or Pagans, we all have our intuitions. We are all made to feel the power of a Control higher than ourselves, of a beauty that we are dimly conscious of but can never see, the existence of a "light that never was on sea or land" —the realm to which our ideals owe their distant birth. We poise ourselves on wings and soar a

little; but the soul of our ideal is like a twinkling star—far distant—always shining for us, though sometimes obscured—but never reached. Poets, painters and musicians have always yearned for it, and worn themselves to nothingness in the weary quest. But the star does, to some extent, lend its beams to their life work, and gilds it with a light and beauty that expresses *something* at least of its distant glory.

This indwelling sensibility of a glory behind the Veil and of an incomplete revelation to mankind is one of the strongest arguments in support of the doctrine of immortality. The achievements of the greatest among us miss the ideals to which they are dedicated. There is always the consciousness of unattainable super-qualities beyond. The enforced recognition of the existence of these is sufficient, with the wonderful evolutionary progress of the past to guide us, to induce a faith that they will one day be more perfectly comprehended. In immortality lies the solution; then, one feels the senses will be more fully awakened, and all the shadowy suggestions of supreme beauty that now occasionally stir the pulses within us will be transmuted into a perfect clarity.

Without the hope of immortality, how futile seem the upward stirrings of the soul! Only the sense of refinement seems then to support it, and of what value is that in the sum of things. These are the problems that confront us in the poem of *Apollo and the Seaman.* Yet it is none of these aspects that Holbrooke has attempted to reflect in his music.

He has expressed his opinions thus, "Many also thought that I had attempted to represent the philosophy of the poem 'Apollo' musically. From what I have said to you that, in my belief, music is nothing but the expression of feeling, and intense feeling, you will not be surprised if I tell you categorically that I know that philosophy cannot be set to music or expressed by music. What I took for my music from the poem was certain personality and action, for music is always active, if I may use the term. There is nothing stationary about it."

In spite of this *dictum* of the composer, however, I think that Elgar got pretty close to the philosophy of Newman's poem in *The Dream of Gerontius*. In that great work we are made to feel very potently that longing for the ideal and the nostalgia of the vital essences for the *being* from whence they sprang—two great offshoots of a belief in immortality. However, Holbrooke has told us how he wishes his symphony to be regarded, and though we may have a sense as of something missed in the passing over of the spiritual import of its subject, it is only fair to consider it in the light of the composer's intentions at the time of writing it. Viewed thus, the work is a remarkably fine one. It is pregnant with powerfully expressed and picturesque ideas, and is clear, dramatic and thoughtful. It contains much music of great beauty, whose fitness to the pictorial situation is both eloquently and intellectually realised. None of the other poems, indeed, can show a finer regard for melody than this one does.

It is packed full of splendid themes of a lofty and dignified character, vividly and strikingly presented, whilst the whole work is particularly rich in that abundant vitality of which the composer holds the master-key. The complication of the orchestral score is amazing, yet all is the logical outcome of the subject. None of the other poems indeed show such rich contrasts of orchestral colouring. The instrumental combinations are always undergoing changes, and many new and beautiful effects have been achieved by the composer. The orchestral writing has the irradiating quality of the prismatic hues of a crystal—ever shifting yet ever glowing—whilst the music, generally, has an open-air character about it that is thoroughly in accordance with the boldness of its subject, and we no longer find ourselves wandering about in the dim mysterious night beneath the dark and lofty trees of *Ulalume*, nor concerned with thoughts of frenzied horror as we were in *The Raven* and *The Bells*, nor revelling in scenes of fantasy as we were in *Queen Mab*. Instead, we have a new idiom that goes to show the versatility of the composer's style and the actively extensive nature of his mental functions. *The Viking* is the work that comes nearest into line with *Apollo and the Seaman*, but it is not nearly so mature as the latter work either in thought or in execution.

*Apollo and the Seaman* has been called "an illuminated symphony" by reason of the poet's intention that the text of the poem should be projected on a screen by a magic lantern during the

progress of the music. The object intended to be attained by this procedure is an effect of dignity, mystery and solemnity by a combination of poetry and music simultaneously concentrated upon the same ideas. The orchestral score, however, contains a note that, for the full effect, *either* the poem *or* the music should be known well beforehand, and that *then* their combination will not be found otherwise than harmonious during the actual performance. It is also pointed out that the words of the poem should be cast on the screen in exact time with the changes of music in the orchestra as the Symphony proceeds, and also that the words should slightly precede the corresponding music.

We saw, in the first chapter of this volume, that Holbrooke was not greatly in favour of this method of performance, and I quote a few of his own opinions regarding it. "That I proposed its performance should be in the dark, is true, but I did not favour the screen. With a long poem like *Apollo and the Seaman* it need not be said that some parts would hardly be touched by music—much of the argument, for instance, and the philosophy. The whole poem being shown, threw the music, in many places, behind its purpose, hence many opinions that the two (the poetry and music) were hardly wedded, were quite reasonable. With a shorter poem and more latitude allowed for emotion, the poem could be easily read; but I fear my sympathy hardly goes towards a screen. It is impossible to employ two senses at once, especially reading and listening."

*Apollo and the Seaman* was twice produced at Queen's Hall in 1907, conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham, and the composer respectively. The orchestra intended by the composer is one of 85 to 100 performers, together with about 150 to 200 men's voices, and the instruments to be employed in the orchestra are as follows :—Piccolo, three flutes, three oboes, cor-anglais, two clarinets, clarinet in E flat, alto clarinet, bass clarinet, three bassoons, contra-bassoon, four (or eight) horns, four trumpets, three trombones, contra-tuba, euphonium, two saxophones (ad lib), two sarrusophones (ad lib), three tympani, gran cassa, piatti, side drum, triangle, tambourine, bells, glockenspiel, gong, tabor, two harps, celesta, xylophone, violins, violas, violoncelli and contra-bassi.

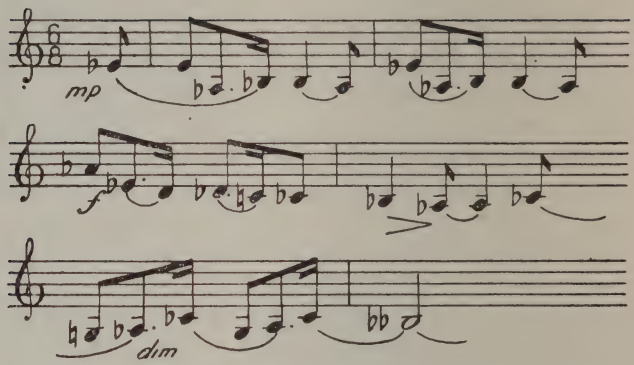
The first part of the Symphony is intended to reflect the first three sections of the poem.

It commences with an introductory passage in which we first hear a bold, authoritative "Apollo" theme representative of his coming to earth, and so, indirectly, of "immortality."

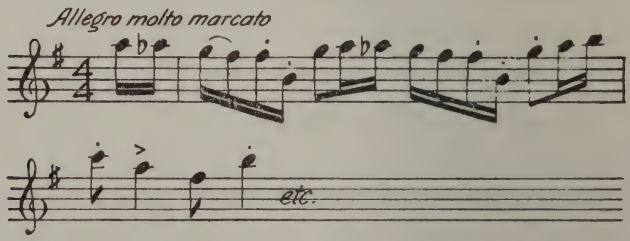
Later, we have another theme, also relating to Apollo, descriptive of the lines—

> "For none had known him by his gait
> Descending from the hills"

which is heard from the clarinets and saxophone accompanied by bassoons. This has a curious but very good effect—




A few bars for horns, trumpets and saxophones, alone, then lead into the first subject of the work—the "Seaman" or "Mortality" theme. This is of a delightful breezy quality, and proceeds from piccolo, flutes, clarinets and first violins, with support from most of the remainder of the orchestra—

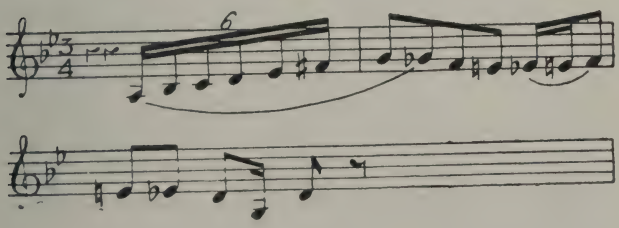



In this virile manner the music proceeds for some time, and is full of happy picturesque suggestions.

The second subject of the movement appears in the key of A minor in two-four time, and is illustrative of "the rumour" that the Seaman has heard concerning the floundering of his ship, "Immortality."

The development section that follows is technically and dramatically strong, whilst the whole movement, generally, is full of interest. As far as form goes, it is very free, but the clear, well-defined themes, so healthy and sane as they are in character, are splendidly exhilarating. The "Seaman" theme is particularly buoyant, and makes us feel very potently the wind-swept surface of the watery wastes and the free, debonair life of those who voyage upon them. It is the outer and not the inner aspect of the poetical allegory that Holbrooke's music defines, and it is replete with that quality which he claims for it—the quality of action—and, moreover, action of a bold, vivid type rich in atmospheric suggestion and romantic in spirit.

The second movement of this work is strangely scored (wind and brass), and comprises that section of the poem in which Apollo confirms to the Seaman the rumour of the loss of his ship and informs him that He, the God, was the builder of it. This takes the place of the *Andante* in the more conventional symphonic form, though, here, the opening tempo is *molto allegro mysterioso,* and there are many variations of this during the course of the movement to suit the exigencies of the poetical subject.



A later *meno mosso molto* passage, illustrative of the line "Like man's weariness of everything that is," lends a pleasing and effective contrast to the opening musical material. No strings at all are employed during the whole course of this movement.

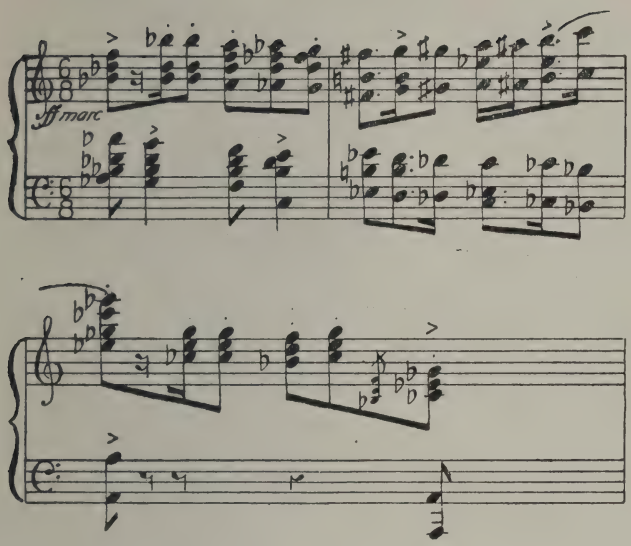
The third movement, which is rhapsodical in character, is the longest of the symphony, and is concerned with the two sections of the poem (the fifth and sixth), in which Apollo tells his story concerning the fate of the ship of his own creation, and is rebuked by the Seaman for what he considers a wanton act on the part of the God. Here there is some falling off in the thematic interest of the music, which becomes rather patchy and chaotic, though the intellectual character of it is indubitable, and the harmonisation and orchestral writing is often of an amazing cleverness. It opens *andantino, molto agitato,* during the course of which we encounter some clever working and developments of previously heard *motifs.*

A new plastic theme is also heard on the violins and clarinets that becomes of great importance as the movement progresses.

The lines descriptive of the mutinous turmoil of the ship's crew—

> "Confused blasts—insolent uproar
> From torch'd and naked men,"

are thus defined in the music—




This is given out by the full orchestra, and from this point the harmonic design of the movement is of the most uncanny character and riotous freedom. It relies less on the beauty of its themes than on its marvellously vivid tonal combinations and orchestral colourings. We are carried away into an orgie of reckless *diablerie*, where, if the music is not always aesthetically beautiful, it is, at least, realistically in keeping with the subject matter that generated it. It is relieved, however, at intervals by quieter moods in accordance with the lines of the poem. Without a knowledge of these to guide one, the listener is left sadly bewildered in the midst of

the enforced attention that the music compels. One passage, illustrative of the lines—

> "Out of the thronged expanse, skull bare
> Heads rose and dropped again"

has a particularly arresting quality by reason of the poignant anguish that it reveals.

The *finale* opens *allegro molto maestoso*. Here we get a new version of the "Apollo" theme of p. 198 (No. 1) from the horns as if to coincide with the character of the new ship that he has created and which the poem here describes. The music that follows is mainly built up out of material borrowed from the theme of p. 199 and from the "Rumour" and "Apollo" themes.

When the God asks—

> "What matters if life ends?"

the character of the ensuing musical subject is prefigured in a dialogue, divided between saxophones, sarrusophone and bass clarinet. Then that subject itself appears *adagio solenne* (p. 204), headed with the line—

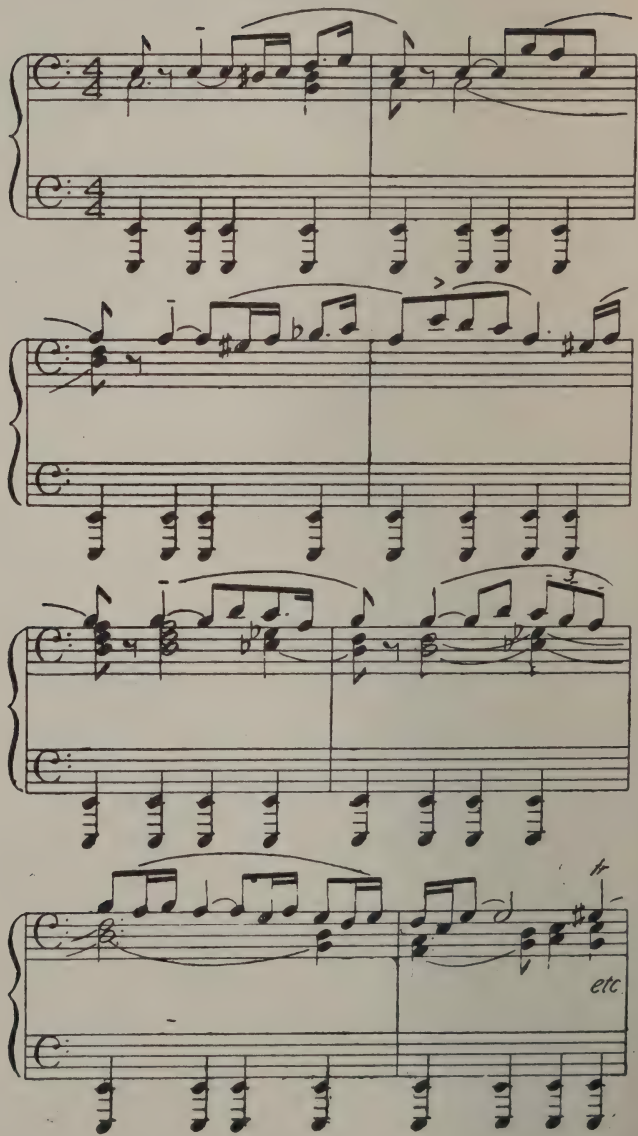
> "I shall tell thee but as music tells,"

with which the God prefixes his account of the true meaning of creation. The individual has been doubtful of the Cosmos, and has experienced a great upheaval of faith; but now comes to him the divinely solemn assurance of the reality of life beyond the grave and *le néant des choses humaines,*

as Balzac once expressed it. His doubts pass away as his mental vision becomes more clarified. It is the consolatory character of the God's message that the composer has sought to define in tone at this point, and he has done so in a noble passage of overwhelming eloquence. His music shows a magnificent perception of the dignity and greatness of the subject with which it has to deal, and the sonorous simplicity of its material, combined with the strength of its religious feeling, are superb in their emotional appeal. No wood-wind or brass instruments are, here, employed at all.

This section of the work, together with the choral portion that follows, is by far the finest by reason of the conciseness of the writing. Much of the third movement of the work suffers from over-elaboration and profuseness, and the work, generally, is unduly long, and would benefit greatly by compression. Here, in the last movement, we have a terse epitome of the leading ideas of the poem, and performances of this, apart from the rest of the work, which have occasionally been given, have proved very interesting, even if they have been rather incomplete as definitions of the full subject matter.

The choral section of the work is divided between tenors and basses—no female voices being employed at all. It commences with an account of the departure of the God, set in the form of a recitative, gradually rising up the scale, and accompanied by a long sustained common chord of C major from the strings. Then the "Seaman"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etc.

theme of p. 198 (No. 2) begins to assert itself in the orchestra, whilst the vocal writing follows as nearly as possible the inflexions of the speaking voice. Reminiscences of the theme of p. 199 again recur in the instrumental tones until the glorious melody of p. 204 re-appears with vocal reinforcement *molto maestoso, adagio non troppo,* creating a magnificently impressive effect. The close of the movement, also, with its unusual harmonic progressions, can hardly fail to interest all those who can appreciate the added tonal beauties with which modern art has enriched the science of music.

The finest portion of this work, as has already been pointed out, is that which is dominated by the theme of p. 204, and this, as we have seen, is concerned with Apollo's promise of immortality, and not with any external happenings. The music is, here, allowed to proceed evenly upon its course without any occasionally irritating obtrusions of irrelevant, secondary, material, suggested by the verbal ideas of the poem. It is less a picture than an emotion that it defines. Certain portions of *The Viking, Queen Mab* and *The Song of Gwyn ap Nudd* did the same, and the most distinguishing qualities of those works were to be found there. The pictorial should have its place in art, by all means, but it should not be allowed to monopolise affairs. Abstract ideas and psychology call for illustration, too. We find fragmentary traces of the composer's realisation of this need in both his poems and symphonies, but it is the pictorial aspect that is mainly predominant. He has great powers of visualisa-

tion, but he generally visualises objectively rather than introspectively. Such poems as *The Bells* and *Apollo and the Seaman,* though imbued with wonderful strength of imagery and showing a fine synthetical power in their creator so as to render them unique in English art, nevertheless leave something to be desired. They amaze without quite satisfying.

That the composer has the strength to write noble and soul-uplifting music, however, has been exemplified on many occasions in his work.

# CHAPTER IX

## MISCELLANEOUS ORCHESTRAL WORKS

*Suites*—

Op. 36 (b) "Pierrot Ballet."
Op. 38 "Dreamland."
Op. 40 "Les Hommages"

*Variations*—

Op. 37 (a) "Three Blind Mice."
(b) "Girl I left behind me."
Op. 60 "Auld Lang Syne."

*Ballets*—

Op. 61 "Coromanthe."
Op. 62 "The Moth."
Op. 66 "The Red Masque."

*Incidental Music*—

Op. 17 (No. 8) "Pontorewyn."

*Brass Band Works*—

Op. 69 (a) Girgenti.
(b) Butterfly of the Ballet.
(c) A Hero's Dream.

*Orchestral Chorus*—

Op. 26 Triumphal March.

In addition to the works discussed in the two preceding chapters, all of which are based upon poetical subjects, there are other orchestral compositions whose programmic derivation is not so definite. These are generally light in character, and Holbrooke does not regard them as representative works in the sense that *The Raven, Ulalume, The Viking, The Bells* and *Apollo and the Seaman* may be considered such. Still, they possess many graceful ideas and many flashes of genuine humour, and they are not among the least popular of Holbrooke's works.

### *Suites.*

Of the three Suites written by the composer, the first, the *Pierrot Ballet Suite,* is somewhat similar in its motive to that of Schumann's group of piano pieces *Carnaval,* and to that of Macdowell's group of piano pieces *Marionettes.* It comprises six numbers, entitled respectively *The Revels, Arlequin, Colombine, Pantalon, Clown* and *Tarantelle,* and the music is generally of a particularly individual and winsome character.

This little work, in its original form of four numbers, was entitled *Pantomime Suite,* and gained the "Charles Lucas" medal in 1897. As we saw in the first chapter, it was then written for strings alone, but it is now also arranged for a full orchestra, and forms the ballet to the *Pierrot and Pierrette* operetta.

Altogether, the suite is a delightful example of the composer in his lighter mood, and it has many attractions.

His second suite, *Dreamland,* however, is still better, and, as we have already seen, was first produced at the Hereford Festival of 1906, though it was written many years before that time. It can lay no claims to greatness, but is, nevertheless, charming throughout. The gracefulness and pleasing quality of its melody should be sufficient argument to disarm those critics who deny that the composer has the power to write it. It is packed full of dainty, engaging rhythms, which are handled in such a manner as only a man of refined musical temperament could have done.

The work is divided into four parts, entitled respectively, *Ensemble, The Dance, Dreaming* and *Hilarité.* It is scored for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, three tympani, big drum, side drum, cymbals, triangle, tambourine, harp and strings.

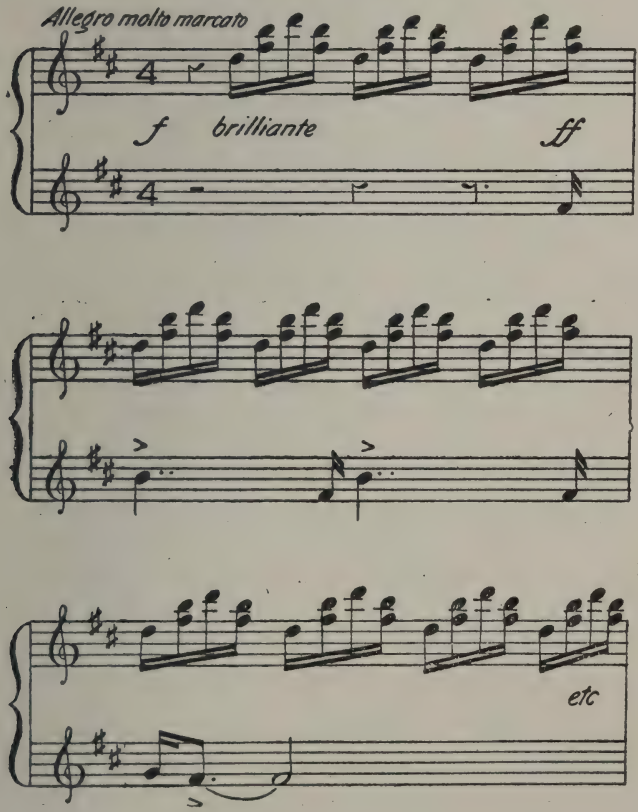
Holbrooke's third Suite, *Les Hommages* (formerly known as the "*Bohemian*" *Suite*) is far more ambitious in its aim than either of his previous Suites, and it has proved one of his most respected works. It was originally written in 1900 for strings alone, but was afterwards amplified and re-scored by the composer, and first produced by Henry J. Wood at a Promenade Concert at Queen's Hall in October, 1906. It was intended as an act of homage to four composers for whom Holbrooke has

particular admiration—namely, Wagner, Grieg, Dvořák and Tschaikowsky. The work is in four movements, and each movement imitates the style of one of these composers in turn. The themes are, with one exception, the composer's own, but he has so steeped himself in the harmonic and rhythmic peculiarities of the music of the composers whose mannerisms he has chosen to imitate, and also in their methods of orchestral writing, that, in three of the movements, at least, we are never left in doubt for a moment of the subject imitated. The work is not a mere *jeu d'esprit,* but it is a fine work of art also, full of remarkable cleverness of idea and of execution. Outside his compositions with a poetical basis, it takes *premier* place, and adds further evidence of the fine versatility of its composer, and is also a lustre to English art generally.

*Les Hommages* is scored for three flutes, one piccolo, bass-flute, two oboes, oboe d'amore, cor-anglais, two A clarinets, E flat clarinet, B flat clarinet, bass-clarinet, alto-clarinet (or corno di bassetto), three bassoons, contra-bassoon, soprano B flat, alto E flat, tenor B flat, and baritone E flat saxophones, four (or eight horns), four trumpets, bass trumpet, three trombones, contra-tuba, contra-trombone, three tympani, grand cassa, side and tenor drums, cymbals, triangle, tambourine, gongs, harps and strings.

The first movement *Festiva* (*Marcia Heroique*) *Hommage à Wagner* has no introduction, and we plunge, at once, into the first subject, which is

announced by the oboes, cor-anglais and horns. This has some suggestions of the "curse" *motif* from *The Flying Dutchman,* whilst it is accompanied by a busy, excitable, rhythmic figure from the piccolos, flutes, clarinets and strings that recalls the famous "Ride of the Valkyries"



A later subject carries our memories back to one of the love *motifs* of *Tristan und Isolde.*

The second movement *Serenata (Hommage à Grieg)* is only scored for a small orchestra of flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, alto and baritone saxophone, horn, harp, four first violins, four second violins, four violas, four violoncellos, and two contra-basses. This number is less successful than the other numbers of the Suite. It is not that it is unmelodious, or that it is weakly written, but that the Griegian character is not so well maintained in the music as is the character of the music of the other composers to which this Suite also renders homage. The *Serenata* opens in three-four time in the key of E minor, and, after four bars of introductory chords from second violins, violas, and 'cellos, the first theme is announced as a solo by a muted first violin.

The third number *Elegiac Poeme (Hommage à Dvořák)* is scored for strings and harp only, the strings being now divided into sixteen parts. It is the most aesthetically beautiful portion of the Suite, and is full of good, contrapuntal writing. The first *motif* is announced by the strings in the key of D minor, and the movement has moments of great emotional intensity.

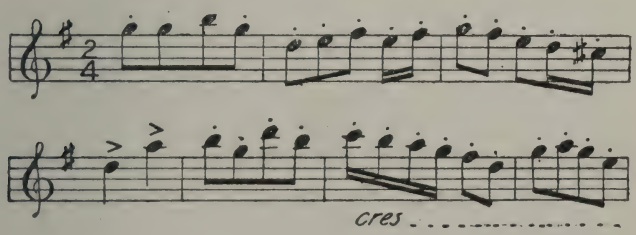
In the fourth and last number, *Introduction and Russian Dance (Hommage à Tschaikowsky),* the full orchestra is employed. It is a superbly clever piece of work, ingeniously elaborated and richly orchestrated. The style of the Russian master is excellently maintained throughout, and the number forms an eloquent finish to an exceptionally fine

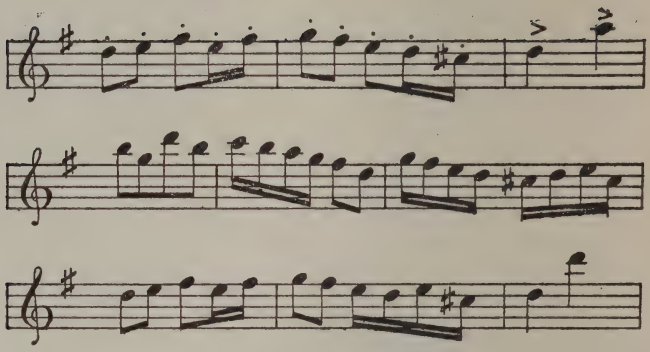
Suite. The opening passage *adagio sostenuto,* for divided 'cellos and contra-basses and drums, takes us, at once, into the sombre atmosphere of the opening bars of Tschaikowsky's *Pathetic* Symphony.

It is followed by an *animato* from the divided first and second violins and triangle, the material of which also suggests a passage similarly placed in the first movement of the Russian composer's work.

This subject is continued, with an increasing volume of tone, to which a few chords from the horns add emphasis, until a climax on syncopated triplet octaves from part of the wood-wind and brass is reached, when the music again quickens, and a new subject of a strenuous character is announced by brass and wood-wind.

At the end of this Introduction, a few syncopated reiterations of the note, D, by oboes, cor-anglais, soprano saxophone and trumpets, succeeded by an ascending scale for the first and second violins, then lead into the Russian dance subject, which is announced by the first violins alone, *moderato allegro,* and afterwards treated fugally in a very elaborate manner. This subject is borrowed from a Russian folk-tune.





A *Coda* ensues in which successions of thirds from a portion of the orchestra are heard in conjunction with material suggested by the fugal subject, and the music evolves into a wild rush of notes, terminating *ritenuto* with a few heavy chords from the full orchestra in G major.

Altogether, this number is a very notable achievement. The wonderful ingenuity displayed in the handling of the theme, the great diversity of the contrapuntal writing that accompanies each appearance of it, and the vivid and varied character of the orchestration, alone, mark it out as the work of a remarkably clever musician. But it is something more than this. It is the work of a *thorough* artist. Not only is it rich in its technique, but also in its musical ideas. The combination of these two qualities render it a fine work of true musical genius, and it forms a fitting peroration to a Suite that is, generally, an honour to British art.

*Variations.*

Of Holbrooke's sets of symphonic *Variations*, that founded on the old English air of *Three Blind Mice* is the best known. In writing this work, the composer chose to don the cap and bells and to disport himself for our diversion, and his music is of exuberant burlesque. Humour in music, however, is such a comparative rarity that it is always doubly welcome, and, in writing in this vein, Holbrooke once more proved the many-sided nature of his temperament. From the gloomy poems founded on Edgar Allan Poe's work to the *Three Blind Mice Variations*, how wide a gulf is stretched! Yet in both works, how patent is the touch of a master hand! No one, indeed, was better qualified to deal with such a subject than Holbrooke. His power of inventing an apparently unending variety of rhythms and his fine sense of harmony enabled him to invest the simple little air with a wealth of subtle illustrations, all of which are conceived and executed with the soundest scholarship. The theme itself may not be of any great consequence, but the resourcefulness with which it is treated is beyond cavil, and the work is a particularly delectable one—infectious in its humour and superabundant in its fancy.

It was first produced by Henry J. Wood at Queen's Hall in 1901, and is dedicated to that fine critic, Ernest Newman. For its performance, a large orchestra is required. It is scored for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, cor-anglais, two clarinets, two

bassoons, contra-bassoon, four (or eight) horns, three trumpets, three trombones, bass-tuba, three tympani, cymbals, side-drum, triangle, tambourine, glockenspiel, harps and strings. The orchestral score also contains a note that the wood-wind may be increased *ad lib.*

The theme upon which these variations are founded is too well known to need quotation. It is simply stated by the strings, *minus* the contra-bassos, and then the variations, which are twenty in number, commence.

Of these, the sixth is noticeable for the humorous matter supplied by the wood-wind instruments; the eighth, where the theme is given out in inverted form with a lullaby-like accompaniment from the wood-wind, is delightful; in the eleventh, the first four bars of *The British Grenadiers* are introduced as a counter subject to the fifth and sixth bars of the main theme with excellent effect; in the twelfth, the first line of the melody of *For he's a jolly good fellow* asserts itself hilariously from the trumpets in the midst of a charming and graceful waltz; in the fifteenth we have a stirring military march with the strings all silenced, in which there is again a fugitive hint of *The British Grenadiers* melody; the sixteenth variation takes the form of a wild Dervish dance, and is one of the cleverest of the whole set; in the eighteenth, we have a hornpipe, and in the nineteenth a funeral march of supreme beauty; whilst in the twentieth, the *Finale,* is to be found a splendidly clever and ingenious piece of writing in which the melodies of *The British Grenadiers* and

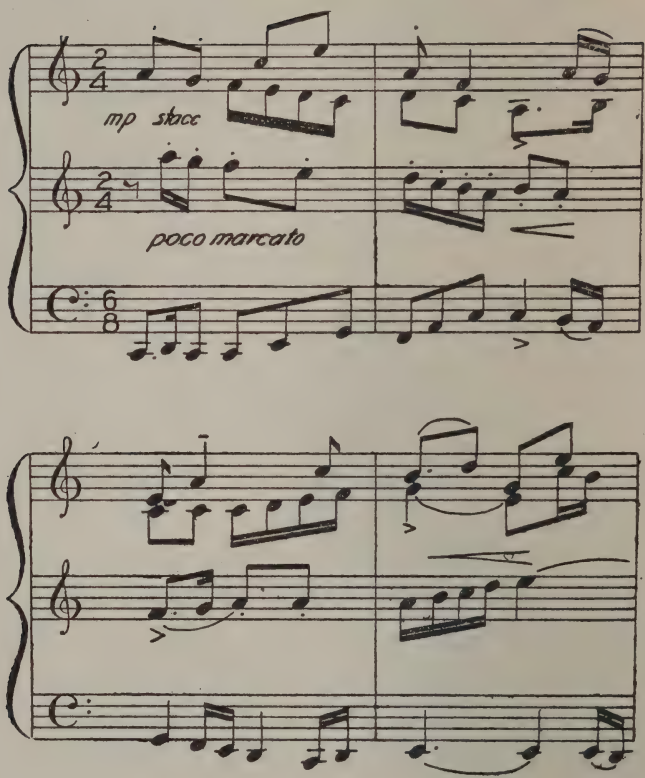
*For he's a jolly good fellow* are again introduced with exhilarating emphasis.

This set of Variations is excellently arranged by the composer, and published for pianoforte duet.

Holbrooke's set of orchestral variations on "*The Girl I left behind me,*" though no less ingenious than the variations just discussed, in the combinations of various melodies and in the plastic moulding of the variation theme, are nevertheless not quite so aesthetically persuasive. They are scored for a grand orchestra of two (or four) flutes, two (or four) oboes, cor-anglais, two (or four) clarinets, bass clarinet, two (or four) bassoons, contra-bassoon, four (or eight) horns, two trumpets, two cornets, three trombones, contra-bass tuba, three tympani, bass drum, side drum, cymbals, glockenspiel, triangle, bells, tambourine, two (or four) harps and strings (60 to 90). The Variations are fifteen in number.

IV. This is written in the form of a fascinating mazurka, with the theme very skilfully metamorphosed.

XI. This is the most ingenious and the most cleverly written of all these variations. The theme, in two-four rhythm, which is apportioned between various of the brass instruments, is canonically treated in the octave. With this is combined the melody of "My lodging is on the cold ground" in six-eight rhythm, from the contra-bassos.




A solo first violin, 'cello, piccolo and oboe take up this latter melody at the fifth bar, which is thus made to form then a double counterpoint to the variation subject. It is also continued half way through the second half of the latter air by first violins, 'cellos, piccolo and oboes.

XII. Here we have an *adagio sostenuto*, with the variation theme given out by the first violins and doubled, part of the way, by flute, clarinet, piccolo and oboe in turn, and supported by chords from others among the wood-wind instruments and strings. Against this, contrary motion is heard from other parts of the orchestra, whilst fragments of the melody of "Rule Britannia" are introduced as a counterpoint from time to time.

XIII. This Variation is very weird in effect. The theme is given out *vivace* by the violins and violas in the key of C minor, with some shifting in the position of its accents.

XIV. The theme is much metamorphosed in this variation, and now appears *andante* in three-four time from a solo viola.

XV. In the last variation, all dark moods are cast aside, and the tone of the music is bright and joyous. The full theme appears twice, and, on its first appearance, the rhythm is ingeniously varied, and the early bars of it are apportioned between piccolo, flutes, oboes and cor-anglais, and combined with a contrapuntal subject from the strings. During the course of this, there are also entries for the side drum and glockenspiel.

In addition to being scored for the full orchestra, these Variations are excellently arranged for a military band of piccolos, flutes, oboes, cor-anglais, B flat, E flat, alto and bass clarinets, bassoons, soprano, alto, tenor and bass saxophones, cornets, flugel horns, trumpets, horns, baritones, euphoniums, trombones, bombardons, sousaphones, sar-

rusophones, tympani, glockenspiel, triangle, tambourine, side drum, bass drum, cymbals and jingles by the composer.

Holbrooke's third set of *Variations* (Op. 60)—on the air of *Auld lang syne*—is even superior to the two earlier sets, and further exemplify his wonderful facility in writing in this form. The variations, which are twenty in number, are intended as portraitures of various musical friends of the composer, and partly, as imitations, of certain characteristics to be found in their work. Elgar attempted something similar in his Enigma Variations.

The *Auld lang syne* variations are scored for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, cor-anglais, E flat clarinet, two B flat clarinets, bass clarinet, corno-di-basetto, two bassoons, contra-bassoon, four (or eight) horns, four trumpets, three tenor trombones, bass trombone, euphonium, contra-bass tuba, three tympani, gran-cassa, and becken, side drum, triangle, harps, glockenspiel, xylophone and strings.

The theme is first announced by trumpets in the key of G, accompanied lightly by horns, trombones and remaining trumpets. Of the variations, the first (J.H.), representative of the composer, has the theme apportioned between various instruments, *poco animato,* the first half of it being accompanied by flowing quaver movement, and the latter half by full chords, during which the music proceeds to a climax and then relaxes. No brass instruments are used in this variation. Var. 4 (Coleridge-Taylor), *adagio sostenuto,* is of a tragic cast,

with a minor version of the melody, partly in the clarinet and second violin parts and partly in the horn, trumpet, violin and viola parts, to which a *tremolo* from the lower strings adds a prominent feature.

Var. 5 (Vaughan Williams) is also in a minor key, and the theme is heard from the brass, allied to heavy chords from the same part of the orchestra, and surrounded by a frisking series of semi-quaver notes from wood-wind and strings. The music of this variation is particularly fine.

Var. 9 is interesting as a portraiture of Edward Elgar. The full orchestra is employed, and the writing is very delicate and graceful. The variation theme is almost submerged whilst two well-contrasted subjects proceed from different parts of the orchestra. We also have suggestions of the melody of *All thro' the night.*

The tenth Variation is very ingenious. It is intended as a musical portraiture of F. Delius, and is an *adagio sostenuto* in eight-four time. Here the main theme is cleverly combined with the melody of *Auld Robin Gray.*

The fifteenth Variation (C.F.) is a *poco allegro moderato* in which the variation subject appears in metamorphosed form above tonic and dominant pedals, whilst the violins dance a light measure of semi-quavers throughout. The effect is very happy.

The nineteenth Variation (J.H.F.) is very attractive, and opens with octave passages for violins and violas played mostly in contrary movement to

octave passages for 'cellos and basses. Combined with these, the brass instruments assert the Variation theme. Later, the airs of *Yankee Doodle* and *Annie Laurie* are heard on the glockenspiel.

The Finale (Granville Bantock) is an *allegro maestoso molto,* and it forms a dignified and impressive peroration to a remarkably fine and well-proportioned work.

Altogether, three such sets of Variations as we have here would be sufficient to build up any composer's reputation; yet they form but a branch of Holbrooke's genius. That he has a special gift for this class of work, there can be no gainsaying. Moreover, his music pulses along in such a facile fashion that it is easy to overlook the fine technique underlying it. *Ars est celare artem.* He has taken simple themes and moulded them in plastic fashion into forms full of rich contrasts. The different shades of emotion scattered over these groups of variations are quite protean in character, and such as one would expect from a man whose art is not cramped by the limited boundaries that hem in so many other composers.

### *Ballets.*

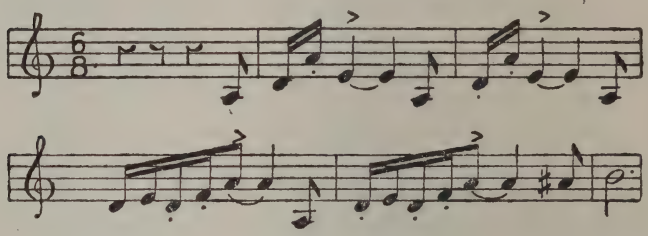
Holbrooke shares with many other modern musicians an interest in the Ballet, and has written four works of great distinction belonging to this class of musical composition, of which the "Pierrot" ballet-music has already obtained separate mention. These do not follow

in the track of the airily graceful ballets of the French school, as represented by Delibes, which fall with such dulcet charm upon the ear but never stir any emotions far below the surface; nor do they follow in the track of later writers, such as Stravinsky, whose work often repels by reason of its eccentricity. Instead, Holbrooke steers a middle course between the two, and has based his work on beautiful melody combined with rich poetic suggestiveness. In its imaginative quality, the music of his ballets comes more into line with some of the work of Chabrier, though the idiom of the two composers is different.

*Coromanthe* or *The Dawn of Love* (Op. 61) is a particularly exquisite creation, and ranks high among the composer's general work. It centres round the following subject:—Coromanthe presents herself before the Gods seated upon their throne of cloud in the sky, and mutely pleads with them for the removal of the dark mists that veil the face of the sun. At first they listen coldly, but ultimately relent and then withdraw; whereupon, Coromanthe, in delirium, breaks into a "dance of joy." Later, she sings a rhapsody of greeting to the dawn that comes with the sun's release from night. A handsome young God then enters and wooes her hotly. Coromanthe returns the God's caresses, and falls asleep on his breast. He places her to rest on a cloud, but the hot sun, beating down upon her, renders her uneasy, so that the God covers the sun's face with his cloak and a marvellous sunset results. Puzzled at the strange light, the old

Gods return, but, discovering the cause, again retire. Then the wooing of Coromanthe by her superhuman lover becomes more intense, and, together, they sink earthwards in their passion as the curtain falls.

The work is written for full orchestra, and opens with a beautiful and eloquent theme for horns expressive of the mystery of the godlike lover—



As Coromanthe appeals to the Gods, the music is full of emotional intensity, and when she has gained her purpose and she is left alone, the mysterious theme already quoted again asserts itself as if to prefigure the approaching "dawn of love." Her dance, save for a short passage *poco presto* in two-four time, is in waltz rhythm, and is both gracefully melodious and fascinating. At the close, the "dawn of love" theme reappears to herald in her song, an optional number, which may be either cut or retained. The work, however, is much more complete with this vocal portion than without it, for it is full of a glowing ecstasy, and is one of the finest of all the composer's works for a solo voice. With the entry of the young God, the main theme naturally surges up in the orchestra to

be followed by other thematic material taken from the introduction. And so the music proceeds, now palpitating with passion and now lulling to sensuous peaceful happiness. It is a thing of sheer poetic beauty throughout, without a single dull thought creeping in to mar any single part.

The second ballet, "*The Moth*" (*Op.* 62), also for full orchestra, though rather less distinguished than its predecessor, is, nevertheless, a work of much charm. "Moth" is discovered asleep under the trees until six Glow worms enter, and, dancing around, awake him. Still languid from sleep, Moth joins in their measure in a slow and dignified manner. The moon is slowly rising, and as Moth sees it he grows excited, and all kneel and do homage to it. As they kneel, Flame dashes on and dances wildly, and, finally, disappears, followed by the attracted Moth. Six Sparks who had attended Flame then dance with the Glow worms. Flame reappears dancing with Moth circling around her. Finally, Moth rushes at Flame and embraces her. There is a blinding flash of red, followed by darkness, and the curtain falls.

The opening musical passages are exquisitely suggestive of the peaceful orchard flooded with moonlight where Moth lies sleeping, and there are here some wonderfully expressive harmonic progressions. The entrance of the Glow Worms takes place to a graceful *cantabile* passage in waltz *tempo*. There is much piquancy, too, in the music of the dance of the Moth. In the dance of Flame, the orchestra is much occupied with a little upward

flickering *motif* that is very suggestive of darting flames. In the Dance of the Sparks and Glow Worms, the consecutive fifths in the middle part of the harmony above a freakish little figure from the lower instruments combine to produce a movement of much character. The end of the ballet is dramatically achieved, and the work, though less complete poetically than many of the composer's other conceptions, possesses a good deal of fascination.

*The Red Masque* (Op. 67) is a work of larger dimensions than the other two ballets, and its subject has been adapted from the famous story by Edgar Allan Poe. The scene of the first part of the first act is laid outside the gates of the Palace, within which Prince Prospero is giving a ball to his friends, knights and ladies. In the second part of this scene he commences a languid dance, but is interrupted by a rabble of yokels, who come laden with fruit, wine, etc. The Prince directs them to the entrance door of the Palace, and they pass inside with their provisions.

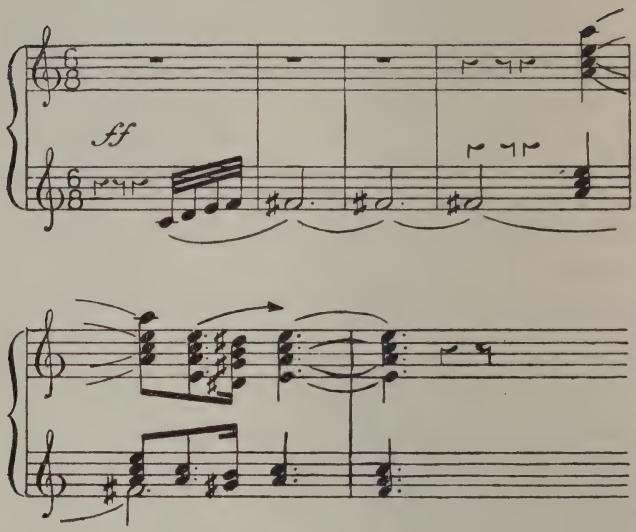
We then reach the second act (which is in three parts), within the Palace, where a scene of unbridled license and revelry prevails. In and out among the wild throng of dancers moves a shrouded figure in grey clinging garments, splotched with scarlet blobs. It moves in a slow palsied dance amongst the crowd, who shrink away in horror. The Prince, dancing with his favourite light of love, "Beauty," is interrupted by his guests, who implore his help, pointing in terror to the right. The clock strikes six, and the Prince resumes his

dance and removes the veil from his lady's face, becoming eager in his attentions. She flies and he pursues.

In the second part we have a bacchanal dance. The Prince sees something which appals him. He rushes to Beauty, who escapes him again. The clock strikes ten. In the last part the Prince hurries into the Palace after the sinister stranger, and makes imperious gestures of dismissal. The figure points to the clock, which now booms out the hour of midnight. The Prince retreats in terror, as the shrouded being pursues him slowly and menacingly among the dancers. The figure then throws off its spectral shape, and is seen to be no other than Beauty the dancer.

As will be seen from this sketch, as appended to the ballet, the subject varies from that of Poe, and loses a lot in the transformation. In his desire to give a less gruesome ending to his work, the composer has sacrificed the dramatic completeness that the story possessed, and the eerie character of the Red Death as imagined by Poe loses its symbolical significance, and becomes an uninteresting and unconvincing personage. Holbrooke's music, however, is so realistically vivid and fine that one comes to the conclusion that it was rather Poe's version of the story than this altered version that he had in mind when writing most of it.

The work is scored for a full orchestra, and the leading theme of the first number in the scene outside the palace is bold and dramatic, as if suggesting portentous events—




This rhythm dominates things for some time until a sinister subject in the bass asserts itself. This is, in turn, ousted by a new and important subject representative of the dandified petulant Prince, and suggested by the last quoted subject. Then the music proceeds to grow more wild and riotous, and chromatic harmony is freely indulged in until a gong booms out the hour of three.

The Dance of the buffoons and deformed is formed from material largely borrowed from the theme quoted above. At the close of this the clock strikes four.

The dance of Prince Prospero is a *valse*

*mysterious* in C minor, and the harmonies are weird and harsh in quality, descriptive of the ribald voluptuousness of the masquerade. In this fashion the music continues for some time, during which a passage of open consecutive fifths above a pedal passage is conspicuous for the strangeness of its effect, whilst the chromatic, swaying nature of the melody is very suggestive. With the striking of the hour of five, we have a change of key, during which the orchestra bandies about ideas borrowed from the valse theme. Time passes quickly during this dance (which is one of the best parts of the work), and with the striking of the hour of eight the movement closes.

The Bacchanal Dance is appropriately wild and very attractive in character, and is based on some bold, vigorous melody. The hour of ten is heard sounding as it ends.

The Finale, "Dance of Death," repeats much of the material of the first number, and then merges into some well-imagined and dramatic developments in which the orchestral writing is very powerfully accomplished. The clock strikes twelve, and, from this point, the music races forward and terminates in frenzied passages of wild emotion.

As far as mere brilliance goes, *The Red Masque* is the most remarkable of all the ballets, and its fantastic subject is reflected in most picturesque manner in the music. One cannot get away from the fact, however, that it belongs to the sensational things of musical art just as Hugo's *Les Misér-*

*ables* belongs to the sensational things of literature. Both compel one's admiration by reason of their rich vitality and glowing imagination, but, speaking personally, much as I prefer the more sober hues of the novels of the Wizard of the North to the more flamboyant pages of the French classic, so I prefer the poetic charm of *Coromanthe* to the feverish fancies of *The Red Masque*.

### *Incidental Music.*

Among the miscellaneous orchestral works must also be ranked the incidental music to a one-act Welsh drama by T. E. Ellis, entitled *Pontorewyn* (Op. 17, No. 8). This consists of three small sections, of which the first opens with a short introductory *andante* passage of three bars. After this the first subject appears *allegro con fuoco*. This is sonorous in character, and proceeds with characteristic strepitosity until a few bars in slow time, curiously harmonised, are reached. A march subject ensues, which eventually merges into the theme of *The Men of Harlech,* boldly delivered by the orchestra with effective tone colour. The second section, *larghetto molto expressivo,* is founded on one of the oldest and most popular folk-tunes in Wales (Song of the Bottle), which is also utilised in the Prelude to the opera *Bronwen*. This noble air also supplies the material for the concluding funeral march.

The music of *Pontorewyn* throughout is most impressive.

### *Brass Band Works.*

Three works for brass bands form the composer's Opus 69—(1) *Girgenti;* (2) *Butterfly of the Ballet;* and (3) *A Hero's Dream.*

The first of these commences *andante sostenuto* with an expressive theme of much poetic charm, and throughout the whole work the stream of melody flows unabated. Never has the composer's gift of simple, unaffected tunefulness served him in better stead. Contrasted with some of his more dramatic creations, it still further proves his versatility.

*Butterfly of the Ballet* is in common time, and is rather shorter than *Girgenti.* It is a bright *vivace,* full of pleasing rhythmic fancies that trip along in an easy, debonair style, but it has not the poetic charm of the first number of the group.

*A Hero's Dream* opens with an *expressivo cantabile* movement in common time, full of placid appeal, and has a bustling middle section, *molto allegro marcia,* which is tunefully vigorous and affords an excellent contrast to the material that precedes it. At the close of this, the first subject is resumed. A short *allegro* passage terminates the work.

Conductors of brass bands have often made an outcry against the lack of such compositions as are to be found here. The musical material of all of them is both tuneful and interesting, whilst the

writing for the instruments is what one would expect from a master of orchestral craftsmanship. Though they are of comparative unimportance when brought into line with his many greater orchestral compositions, they can, in no wise, be accounted negligible.

### *Orchestra and Chorus.*

*Marche Triumphale (Op. 26).* This was written for a competition at the time of the coronation of King Edward VII., but was rejected. When one calls to mind the work that won the prize, one can only marvel. Patriotic sentiment almost always fails in generating inspired art, and usually leads instead to an inflated pretentiousness of style that is anything but commendable. Elgar made a comparative failure with his *Coronation Ode,* and Holbrooke cannot be said to be at his best in his *Marche Triumphale.* The subject with which he had to deal was of too stereotyped a character to suit the peculiar bent of his genius, though his *March* is quite a fair thing of its class. It is written for Chorus and an Orchestra consisting of piccolo, flutes, oboes, clarinets, bass clarinet, bassoons, horns, cornets, trumpets, trombones, tuba, euphonium, tympani, big drum, side drum, organ and strings. The work opens with a few bars of the National Anthem from organ and strings, *adagio sostenuto.* A fanfare or two from the trumpets and

cornets then lead into the first vocal theme of bold swinging rhythm set to the lines—

> "Imperial Empire, throned in peace,
> Thy voice is as the boundless sea—
> Whose mighty song shall never cease
> Beneath whatsoever sky it glow."

which is accompanied, with pompous effect, by the full orchestra. There is a tuneful middle movement, *cantabile expressivo,* in F major, first presented by the orchestra alone, and then repeated by the voices and the work, after a repetition of the first vocal subject ends in pompous, busy fashion. The themes of the National Anthem and "Rule, Britannia" are freely introduced into the musical fabric.

This work, among the bulk of Holbrooke's many compositions, has little artistic significance. It goes, however, to show the composer's love of "fresh fields and pastures new" wherein he may meditate new fancies. It is to such excursive temperaments as his, moreover, that we owe the rejuvenation of the art of music from time to time.

# CHAPTER X

## OPERAS

Op. 36 "Pierrot and Pierrette."
Op. 56 "The Children of Don."
Op. 53 "Dylan."
Op. 67 "Bronwen."

We have seen, in preceding chapters, how Holbrooke apparently became dissatisfied with the purely orchestral poem as a means of expressing romantic verse, and how his inclinations have led him, of late years, to pay more attention to vocal writing than he did at the outset of his career. Taking into consideration the dramatic quality of his genius, it was only natural that this dramatic gift should have eventually directed his thoughts towards the significance of opera as the most complete form of union between music and poetry. Yet, "thoughts are but dreams till their effect is tried"; and, as Holbrooke is a man of action as well as a dreamer, his thoughts were bound to find an outlet by means of objective art some time or other. His natural energy and strong enthusiasms, indeed, are always urging him to test the effect of the various convictions and impulses that germinate within his brain, and there are few branches of his art that he

has not touched. He was quick to perceive the importance of the introduction of voices into his orchestral poems to act as interpreters of the flow of musical speech which, otherwise, proved somewhat ambiguous in meaning.

In opera, too, he foresaw that his own powers of pictorial suggestion could be brought home to his listeners still more *vividly,* and that even stage effects were better than no effects at all to induce the right emotional mood for the comprehension of the spirit of the music. Stage action, allied to music illustrative of the situation, would stir the senses quicker than any mere vocalised description of the same scene or any graphically dramatic and purely instrumental music, representative of the same subject, with which the listener might or might not have been previously made familiar, could do. So, with regard to the stage setting, a *visible* representation of the scenic surroundings among which the events of the story subject were placed, would lend much aid in elucidating the atmospheric suggestions of the music.

The operetta *Pierrot and Pierrette* is, I suspect, experimental. It is based upon a rather conventional subject, of no great poetical significance, and aims at nothing great in the way of musical expression; but it led the way to the magnificent works that were to follow, and is a landmark that goes to show the composer's remarkable progress as an operatic writer since.

*Pierrot and Pierrette,* in spite of many tragic moments in its story, is essentially light in char-

acter. It is not a work of commanding genius, but it is a work of very great charm and of much melodic gracefulness. It is also well adapted for theatrical representation. A few performances of it were given at His Majesty's Theatre in November, 1909, but the work was very inadequately rendered, and the mounting of it was bad. This is to be regretted, for the little operetta, well produced and well sung, ought to obtain much success; moreover, at the performance at His Majesty's, only a bare programme was available, there being no analysis of the work at hand to enhance the interest of the audience.*

The book of the opera is written by Walter E. Grogan, and the subject is an allegorical one. The idea of it was evidently borrowed, to some extent, from the "Faust" legends. The drama is in two acts (or scenes), and is played throughout in an old-world garden in an atmosphere of moonlight. The rising of the curtain displays Pierrette, who is anxiously awaiting her lover, Pierrot. In the background sits Pierrette's nurse. When Pierrot enters, Pierrette fearfully closes the garden-door lest the voice of the town should lure her lover from her side. The moonlight becomes veiled, and the Nurse sings ominously:—

"Moons wax and wane,
Above dead flowers weeps the rain.
Roses die,
And, unremembered, rot and lie;
All life is so,
I know."

* Since this was written, the work has been frequently and successfully performed.

Pierrot and Pierrette, however, soon forget the Nurse's words after she has left them, and their love scene is renewed. They are interrupted by a voice from without, proceeding from a personage known as the "Stranger," urging Pierrot to follow him into the world. The stranger is a sort of Mephistophelean character, who acts as tempter to both lovers, with partial success in the case of the man, but with total failure in the case of the woman. Then begins the contest in Pierrot's mind between the force of his love for Pierrette and the force of the fascinations of the world, as now enumerated to him by the Stranger. Finally, worldly desires prevail. The enchantment of love grows dull in Pierrot's soul, and Pierrette is left in her lonely garden.

The second act opens with the same scene. The Nurse is discovered, awaiting the arrival of the Stranger, who has bribed her to open the garden-door to him. When Pierrette sadly enters a little later, she does not observe the intruder in the garden, but sings to the moon of her sorrows until the Stranger confronts her. He urges his love upon her, and tries to persuade her that Pierrot has forgotten her. She, however, refuses to hear ill spoken of her lover, and pours out her utmost scorn upon the man who would beguile her. Abashed, the coward slinks from the garden. At this point, the voice of Pierrot singing, in the distance, a song of love that she knows well recalls her from her gloomy thoughts. Not as a joyful lover does he come this time, however, but as a broken and disillusioned

man, who dreads lest love has ended for him. Pitying his desolation, Pierrette approaches him, until, half wonderingly, he realises that the garden is no longer a desert place, but that the moonlight falls upon it as tenderly as ever, and that Love is king of it still.

As I have said before, the story is simple, and an allegorical one, and the characters move across the scene as symbols of certain impalpable things. Thus, Pierrette stands for Constant Love, and Pierrot for the reverse; whilst the Nurse (a character somewhat similar to the Barbara of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*) stands for Evil, and the Stranger for the Temptations of the World.

The music of this drama is allotted as follows:—Baritone, Pierrot; Tenor, the Stranger; Soprano, Pierrette; Contralto, the Nurse. It abounds in very pleasing melody, and the music illustrative of the various characters is well differentiated, but the opera, in spite of much tenderness of feeling, is rather devoid of any poignant emotional intensities, and lacks dramatic grip. It skates too much over the surface of things and portrays the tumults rather than the depths of the soul. Still, the work has a very definite atmosphere about it and a certain indefinable charm that is very alluring. The orchestration is light, the number of instruments employed being almost Mozartian in simplicity, though use is made of a saxophone, some concertinas, and harps. There is also a light ballet of six dances now added to this work—between the two scenes, of which mention has previously been made.

We have seen before that Holbrooke is not a man who is easily discouraged. He believes in a future for British opera. Undeterred by any cold douches of criticism, he has gone on working for some years at a cyclopean work before which all his earlier operatic attempts fade into insignificance. This is an operatic trilogy founded on a poetical drama by T. E. Ellis (Lord Howard de Walden), entitled *The Cauldron of Anwyn.*

Conceptions of a far-reaching and colossal character have always exercised a fascination over certain types of the literary and musical mind. Did not Balzac plan and execute his immense work, the *Comédie Humaine?* Did not Zola write a fine trilogy of the three cities—Lourdes, Rome, Paris? Did not Anthony Trollope give us a splendid picture of clerical and country life—in his Barsetshire novels? Has not Hardy written a work of tremendous scope in *The Dynasts,* and Romain-Rolland in *Jean Christophe?* Among musicians, Wagner stands out supreme as the creator of the *Ring.* Holbrooke's scheme of an operatic trilogy ranks with these wide-embracing conceptions. Though it may not be quite a *fait accompli,* two, out of its three parts, are now complete, and are entitled *The Children of Don* and *Dylan* respectively.*

These two music-dramas are works of commanding genius, and exhibit the composer at the very plenitude of his powers. To plan and achieve such works at a time when English art products of this

* Since this was written, the opera *Bronwen* has been completed.

nature obtain so little encouragement is an act of splendid courage—I might say of splendid self-confidence too. Holbrooke has been undismayed at the bigness of the task before him. He has had something of importance to say, and he has felt that, *coute que coute*, he must express it in definite form. The world, at large, has reaped the benefit, and should, one day, eventually endorse the composer's own opinion as to the significance of his work. He has, indeed, now placed his detractors *hors de combat* by the strength of his own genius. No choral work of the modern British school, save the *Dream of Gerontius*, can equal what has been already accomplished of this trilogy. No opera by an English musician is, in any way, comparable to it. In fact, one might go farther and say that no finer work for the stage has been written since Wagner penned his *Parsifal*.

The influence of that great master is felt here, as it is in most modern operas, but, at the same time, there is a distinct Holbrookean spirit about the music with which Wagner has nothing to do. In the use of the *leit-motif* system and in the broad mental sweep over a vast subject, the two composers meet on common ground, and, if Holbrooke has failed to quite reach the emotional depths of the Wagnerian dramas, he has, at least, eradicated many defects to which his predecessor was prone, such, for instance, as the long and often tedious yarns in which the vocalists are made to indulge, and the intrusion of an over-elaborate symbolism.

In *The Children of Don*, as in the later Wag-

nerian operas, there is very little choral writing. In *Dylan*, however, it forms a prominent feature. Holbrooke endeavours to get as many contrasts in his music as possible, and, in the latter work, the use of the chorus helps his aim considerably. As an orchestral writer, we have seen proofs of his marvellous ingenuity in the poems, and his operas are no less pictorially vivid than the earlier creations. No modern composer handles the orchestra with greater ease than he, and when this is combined with equal powers of thematic invention, a sensitive and particularly modern feeling for harmonisation, a strong dramatic bias and fine powers of synthesis, we have the chief qualities that go towards the making of a great writer for the stage.

The subject of the trilogy is one after the composer's own heart—weird, lurid, and full of elemental emotion and passion. It is based upon certain striking incidents, taken from various ancient Cymric legends, combined with some superadded ideas. *The Mabinogion* has been largely drawn upon for material, and more particularly the fables of *Branwen, the Daughter of Llyr,* and *Math, the Son of Mathonwy,* but neither of these has been followed in its entirety. Instead, an unification of different legends has been essayed in which certain features of the original subject matter have been brought into prominence whilst other features have been passed over altogether. Thus, in the operatic version, the story of Elan, or Arianrod, varies considerably from that contained in the ancient lore, many incidents having been entirely deleted, whilst

considerable amplification is shown in other directions; all the happenings of the opera, too, are made to centre around a magic cauldron, but, in the Welsh legends, this object plays quite an ancillary part. Still, some connecting link between the different parts of the trilogy was necessary to lend it unity, and the cauldron has much the same significance here that the "ring" has in Wagner's tetralogy.

The origin of these Cymric stories is very remote, and their nucleus is doubtless to be sought in the ancient mythology of the Celt. Naturally, the form in which we know them is largely coloured by the thoughts and customs of the age in which they were first *written* down, but, at the same time, certain of the incidents that they contain are common with those of the earliest Celtic literature, and are of a decidedly archaic derivation. The author of this operatic trilogy has recognised this fact when marshalling the various fables and myths for the purposes of his drama. He places the action back in the dim, prehistoric ages, when thaumaturgy appears a natural gift, and in which the gods are brought into contact with mankind, and in which super-human deeds are accomplished. Life is rough, rugged and violent, and follows a predestined course, and the elemental laws of nature are uncurbed by a disturbing civilisation. Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* was distinguished by the same qualities, though that work dealt with Teutonic instead of Celtic myths, and was more concerned with the conduct of the Gods than is *The*

*Cauldron of Anwyn.* The two works, however, have many similarities of scope.

Both *The Children of Don* and *Dylan* show signs of thoughtful literary construction and a broad understanding of the spirit of Welsh letters. Their various incidents have been carefully selected and well wielded together to form a consistent story, and a fine poetical gift is evidenced throughout. In places there is a certain vagueness and lack of cohesion about the verses, but, generally, the diction of the poem is good, whilst it is rugged and forceful as the rather barbarous nature of its subject requires.

*The Children of Don* consists of a prologue in two parts and three acts, of which the third is divided into two scenes. Its story is as follows :—

Arawn, the King of Anwyn (Hell) is about to perform a sacrifice of a young virgin to the goddess, Caridwen, whose magic cauldron is its greatest treasure. This cauldron stands upon an altar in a cavern looking out over a field of ice that represents the underworld. It contains the sources of inspiration and desire "whose breath is madness and whose taste is doom." It must also be "virgin-tended, sacred from all who have at heart seeds of desire." Gwydion, the son of Don, arrives at the cavern with the object of filching the cauldron, and a deadly conflict ensues between him and its attendant priests. In the end, Gwydion is victorious, and slays, not only the priests, but Arawn as well. He then seizes the cauldron and departs.

After this, we find ourselves on a wild and rocky

island in the northern seas. All that is visible is desolate and ice-bound. Wild clouds are driving across the sky, whilst snow-storms now and then blot out the scene. The nature-goddess, Don (Thea), appears, and calls on the Sea-King, Lyd (Oceanus), another divinity of the old Titan dynasty, to prevent Gwydion from carrying away the cauldron, the link between humanity and themselves, from its stronghold. Lyd thereupon invokes the decision of the prisoned god, Nodeus (Chronos), the head of the fallen Titans, who has been condemned to eternal sleep. Nodeus, though sleeping, can still dream, however, and voices his dreams aloud in certain cryptic utterances, the result of which is to make Lyd refuse to interfere with Gwydion.

At this point the *prologue* ends, and the *first act* opens with a chorus of Druids in a forest of Arvon (Carnarvon). They have come to instal the cauldron, which has been taken from Gwydion, in a temple of Math, the priest king and magician. This Math is a brother of Gwydion's mother, Don, and Gwydion greatly resents the capture of the cauldron. Among the Druids we encounter the fanatical Gwion, and he and Math give Gwydion the task of guarding the sacred vessel and its vestal virgins from intrusion, and warn him of the dire results that will ensue if he fails in his office. Meanwhile, Goewin, a maiden of the cauldron, has become infected with its atmosphere, and has yielded to the love of Govannion, a half-brother of Gwydion. This is discovered by Elan (or Arian-

rod), the half-sister of Gwydion, who suddenly appears and interrupts one of their stolen meetings. During this scene, Elan discloses the fact that she is born to be the mother of one of the greatest heroes of Britain. Soon Gwydion, too, arrives, but eventually decides not to betray Govannion's love. Gwydion and Elan are then left alone, and the latter begs the former to become her husband, but he, whilst acknowledging the honour that she has done him, rejects her offer.

The scene of the *second act* is the temple containing an altar upon which the sacred cauldron reposes. Goewin is discovered praying for the recovery of her lost innocence, and her prayer is interrupted by Govannion, who enters to chide her for her lack of love for him. Then Gwydion appears, and warns both of them to depart. After some railing at Gwydion, Govannion repudiates Goewin and goes off, whilst Gwydion vainly urges Goewin to forget her passion. Math then enters and Goewin confesses to him that she is no longer a maid, and that Govannion was her lover. Thereupon, Math banishes her, and proceeds to reproach Gwydion for his treachery in failing to guard the cauldron. Backed by Gwion, he sentences him to transformation into beast-shape, though he expresses his sorrow at the fate that compels him to this deed. Gwydion is bound by the Druids to a pointed stone near the altar and then left alone. After a short time, Elan enters and sympathises with him. He tells her of the horrible fate that he must suffer, and then thinks of the cauldron as

a means of release. He asks Elan if she has strength to perform the sacrilege of filling a horn with the poison that it contains. She answers by doing so, and, with the intention of poisoning themselves, they drink the magic potion. Suddenly, Elan crouches down in a listening attitude, and the voice of Lyd, the Sea-King, is heard calling from the sea. Irresistibly, she is drawn by some strange magnetism towards the spot from whence the voice proceeds, and Gwydion is again left alone. Not for long however, for soon the spectral form of Arawn and other demons of hell arise to taunt him and to threaten him with coming torture. His courage does not fail him, however.

> "Nor death nor change shall my straight soul impair
> And I shall fend you in eternal war"

he sings and then calls on Nodeus, at whose appearance the phantom shapes disappear. Nodeus again indulges in some further cryptic utterances regarding the great destiny that is in store for the land, and disappears. Then Math's spell begins to work on Gwydion. Darkness falls, and when it lifts again, Gwydion's bonds are seen empty. The gloom of the background is set with red eyes of wolves, and one grim form comes from behind the stone to which Gwydion was bound and slinks across the stage. Later, we learn that Govannion has shared the same fate with Gwydion. This "wolf" idea was borrowed from *The Mabinogion,* though, there, the transformation was threefold, from men to deer, wild swine, and wolves in turn.

The *first scene of Act III.* is the same as that of Act I., and three years have elapsed since the horror-haunting events with which the preceding act closed. The wolves enter and prowl restlessly about the stage, but as the song of the Druids is heard in the distance, they gather together and depart. Then Gwion appears, to be followed a little later by Goewin, who comes begging for restitution among her own people. Gwion only abuses her, however, and sends her out to the wolves, where she is devoured by Govannion. Math enters and reproaches Gwion for his cruelty, and, in spite of Gwion's protests, repeals the spell upon Gwydion and Govannion. These two then appear worn and emaciated, with wolves' heads for helmets and wolves' pelts for clothing. Govannion slips away into the shadow of the trees, but Gwydion advances and addresses Math wildly and hoarsely. Math tells him that he has stolen a maiden soul from the services divine, and that he must find a substitute for Goewin before he can obtain complete freedom and be made whole. They depart upon this quest, leaving Gwion alone to meditate upon the deadly influence of the cauldron stolen from hell.

The *second scene* is a rocky sea-shore. Elan is discovered sitting on a rock alone mourning the fate of the children of Don, and dreaming of the beauty of her sea-lover whose voice had called her to him. Govannion appears to her, full of horror for the death of Goewin, and full of anger with Gwydion for making friends with Math again. He tells her that Gwydion has chosen her as a sub-

stitute for Goewin as a virgin attendant of the sacred cauldron, and she expresses her readiness to accept that service. Then Math and Gwydion arrive, and the latter explains their errand to her. Math demands a proof of her virginity, and puts her to the test. He draws a line on the ground between himself and Elan, and bids her cross it. She hesitates, and then advances to overstep the line. As she reaches it she recoils, and besides her then springs up the figure of a small boy, Dylan, the son of herself and Lyd, the Sea-King. She takes him in her arms and sinks down ashamed. Math, thinking Dylan to be Gwydion's son, is infuriated, and curses the children of Don, and is about to use his magic when Gwydion, with hostile intent, advances against him. Math calls up his attendant spirits, but, in spite of this, is transfixed by Gwydion's spear. He falls, and Elan becomes unconscious. Govannion enters, and, taking Dylan from Elan's arms, flings him into the sea, which, however, as a son of Lyd, cannot harm him. He then drags Elan away, and Gwydion is left watching Math. The latter revives for a short space to tell Gwydion that much grief awaits him, and then dies. A little later, Dylan climbs out of the sea to the rocks. Gwydion prophecies great things of him, and is then interrupted by Govannion, who reviles Gwydion for having anything to do with the bastard of their race. Further heated words follow, and they proceed to blows. Then Gwion and the Druids enter, to discover the body of Math, and, forthwith, they curse Gwydion. He no longer has

any fear of them, however, and points out Gwion to Govannion as the cruel fanatic who drove Goewin to the wolves. Govannion rushes on Gwion and kills him, whilst the Druids shrink away cowed. Gwydion then bids Dylan take leave of Math Mathonwy, "greatest of the Gaels," and then goes out with him, leaving the Druids grouped around their fallen leader, with Govannion watching them sombrely.

The music of this drama takes us back into the primal heart of things, and, whilst having the iron strength of old Greek tragedy, never loses the spirit of romance. It has the vitality that only belongs to the great things of art, and the composer's imaginative grasp of the various phases of his subject is sure and wide-embracing.

This opera and the second one of the trilogy *Dylan* have a Shakespearean breadth of conception and a Homeric sense of pulsating action. Occasionally, it is true, the melodic interest begins to droop; but, after all, what great work ever lacked its dull moments? Even Wagner could not overcome that failing.

In the vocal writing of both parts of the trilogy, the composer has endeavoured to follow as closely as possible the inflexions of the speaking voice. Vocal melody had, therefore, to be sacrificed to a certain extent, though there are also many fine outbursts of lyrical fervour for the soloists during the progress of the work. When this method of writing, however, becomes inappropriate, by reason of the more dramatic exigencies of the situation, the

melodic interest is maintained by the orchestra in a manner that is full of illuminating suggestion.

The music is dramatic in the best sense of the term, with none of that melodramatic extravagance that mars so many stage dramas. The composer's great gift of sane visualisation is nowhere better evidenced than it is in the music of these first two operas of this trilogy. He sees his picture clearly, and he sees it whole. The great issues of his subject have been grasped by him in their completeness, and he has created unforgettable works of real vital dramatic strength and of eloquent, magical beauty. By reason of the nature of the incidents upon which the drama is founded, the music is generally of a gloomy and sombre character, but it is no petty tragedy with which it brings us into contact, but a tragedy of super-eminent and noble dignity. Though the general tone of the music is fatalistic, it has many definite contrasts of atmospheric and pictorial suggestion to show. Thus, in *The Children of Don,* the gloomy remoteness of the frost-bound region of Anwyn, the playful tossing of the sea-waves on the shore, the grisly horror of the famished wolf-pack, and the satanic ferocity of the demons that taunt Gwydion, are figured in wonderful music that has no parallel save in that of some of the Wagner and Strauss operas, and in that of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande.*

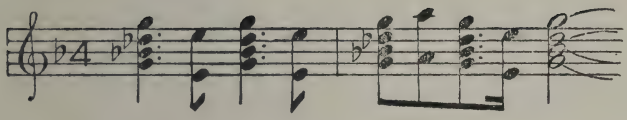
The music, too, that is woven around the doings of the various protagonists of the drama shows much sense of psychological fitness. Arawn plays only a small part in the drama, but the music

allotted to him well defines the solemnity and the sinister quality of his state as ruler of the underworld. The music of Don is not particularly striking, but her appearance in the drama is only of ephemeral interest. That of Nodeus, however, is much better, and excellently reflects his aloofness from active endeavour. Gwydion is definitely and excellently characterised in the music. The leading theme with which he is associated shows him as a man of considerable resolve, but with certain idealistic strains in his nature, and with the capacity for strong and generous affections. In every situation in which he is placed, he remains one of the most subtly-conceived characters of the drama. The music of Govannion, both here and in *Dylan*, is good and extremely interesting, but, psychologically, it is rather bewildering. He is shown in the script as a man of sullen temper, of strong hates and of hot jealousies; ready to love fiercely for a time, but ready also, on an impulse, to reject the maiden of his choice; watchful on behalf of his sister's honour, but careless with regard to that of himself and others; a morbid dreamer of vengeance, and the perpetrator of a cold-blooded murder. Yet the music that surrounds him rarely depicts him as impulsive and unregulated in character, and the leading theme that attaches to him hints at much softer moods than his actions go to show. The character of Math is much more convincingly portrayed by the music, which makes us feel that all his impulses are of a higher and more generous nature than those of the *milieu* in which he exists.

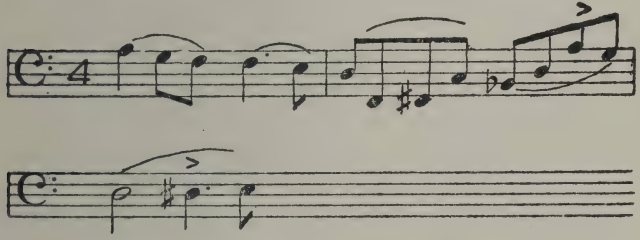
Fate alone and the requirements of his age compel him to act harshly, and he remains a stately and appealing figure throughout. The music of Elan, too, both here and in *Dylan,* is beautifully conceived. In spite of her *liaison* with Lyd, to which Fate condemns her, she is pictured as a pure, tender, self-sacrificing woman, ever ready with her sympathy, and more sinned against than sinning. Never, for one moment, does she descend into the weakly sentimental. Something of dignity always attaches to her, and leaves behind it the impression that the nemesis that eventually she has to suffer is much too heavy for the nature of her offence. Goewin is the maiden in whom the magical properties of the cauldron rouses hot desires, and the music that depicts her passion is much better framed than that which, later, depicts her remorse. The character of Lyd, the Sea-King, is merely sketched in *The Children of Don,* but, in the next opera of the trilogy, he becomes the dominant figure.

The vocal parts of this first drama are divided as follows :—Sopranos (Don and Goewin), Contralto (Elan), Tenors (First Priest, Arawn, Gwion, First and Second Demons), Baritones (Gwydion and Math), Basses (Sea-King, Govannion, Second Priest and Nodeus). The themes of the work are striking and original, and the score is one of great complication.

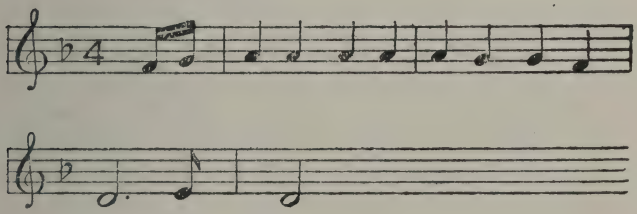
Of the many *motifs* that the opera contains, that representative of the character of Gwydion is of great importance—



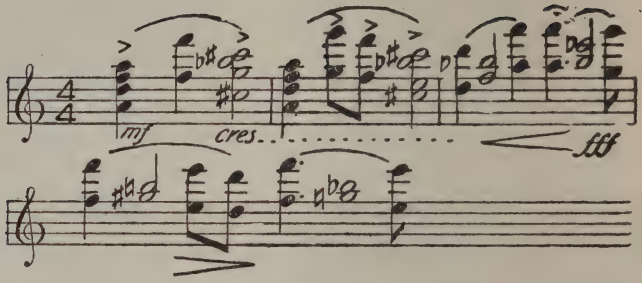
The theme that distinguishes the personality of Govannion has already been referred to, and it becomes of still greater importance in the second part of the trilogy, *Dylan*. It is as follows:—



Math, with his primitive religion, his sad kingship, and his gift of prophecy, is defined in the next quoted theme—

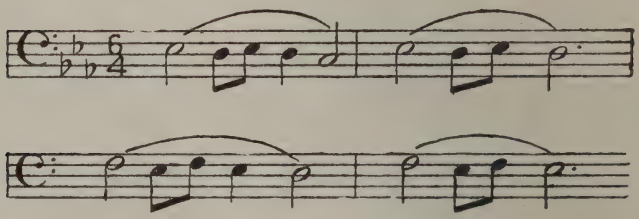


Another theme expresses the mystery that surrounds Dylan—

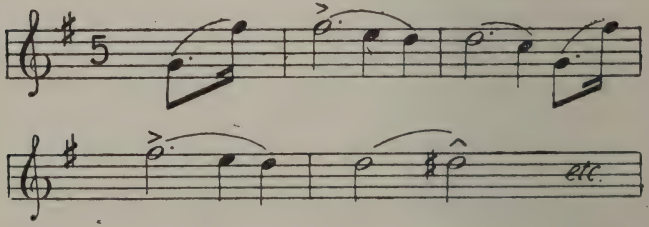



and this theme also becomes much more significant in the second part of the trilogy.

The theme that attaches to Nodeus has also considerable importance in the drama, and typifies aloofness from all mortal concerns—

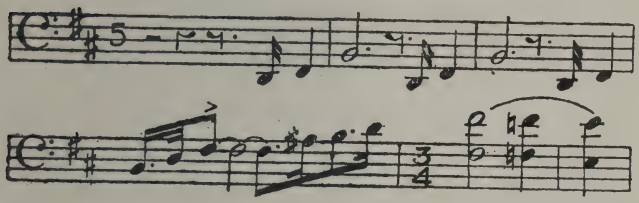


Goewin and her passion is represented by the following—

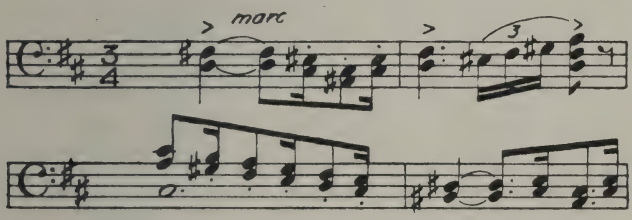


The malignant fanaticism of Gwion is depicted by a little downward leaping one-bar *motif*, whilst a stern theme defines the hopeless and stultified idolatry of the Druids.

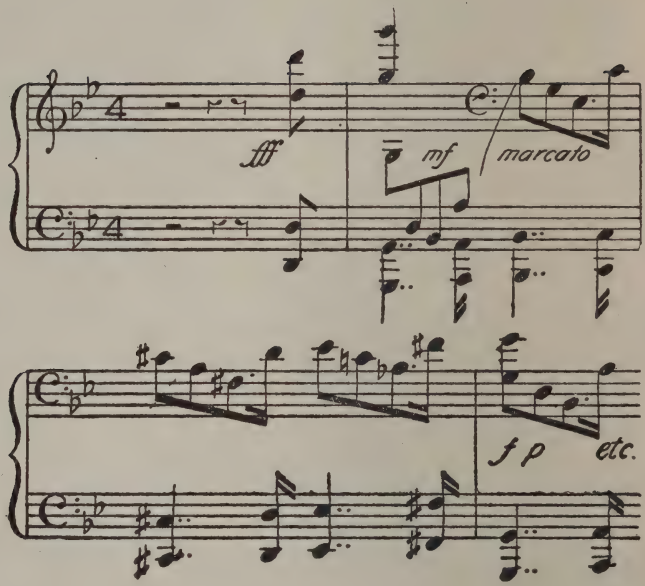
Then there is the "cauldron" theme—



Also the theme associated with the terrors of the underworld—




And, lastly, a very important theme that typifies the general elemental nature of the work, and the stormy, restless character of it all—




The *prologue* of this opera is preceded by a masterly overture, headed with the lines—

> "Summoned are we from the lonely lairs
> Where the storms are born.
> Haled from the void that silence shares
> Where the pits of darkness yawn."

and based upon some of the most important themes of the opera, the leading character being one of turbulency, representative of wild, elemental strife and of the agony at the soul of human things.

The first scene of this prologue is a fine concep-

tion full of real dramatic grip, and of intellectual strength. Here the "cauldron" *motif* and the "Gwydion" theme are particularly prominent, whilst the themes descriptive of the terrors of the underworld and of the elemental nature of the work also play an important part. The second part of the prologue is less interesting, and the music of Don is rather dull, and the Goddess is generally rather a vague and unsatisfactory personage both histrionically and musically. The Sea-King's music is much more individual, whilst that of Nodeus is beautiful throughout, and has that remote placidity that the picture requires without sacrificing any of its limpid beauty. He has a long solo, based chiefly upon his own theme, which is utilised in a manner that is full of wonderful variety. Later, at the lines for the Sea-King—

> "Man shall hear our many voices growing clear
> And stung to new ideas austere,
> Shall feel the heavens ring with trumpets vast
> Calling to battle all the powers outcast,"

we reach one of those lyrical outbursts in which, as it has already been mentioned, this work is particularly rich.

An intermezzo separates the prologue from the *first act*. The austere strains of the Druid's choruses, with which this act opens, well define their religious fanaticism, whilst the ensuing scene for Gwydion, Math and Gwion, though good, calls for no special mention. With the entrance of Govan-

nion and Goewin, however, we have a duet that is one of the lyrical gems of the opera.

Rarely has the enchantment of night in awakening the soul to love been more exquisitely painted. The music is rich with an idyllic beauty of phrase, and, as the ardent strains rise and fall in the midst of this forest silence, one realises how faultlessly the emotional mood of the hour has been caught. The later duet between Gwydion and Elan is another passage of fragrant loveliness, in which the deeply tender woman-nature of Elan is reflected in cogent and eloquent musical phraseology.

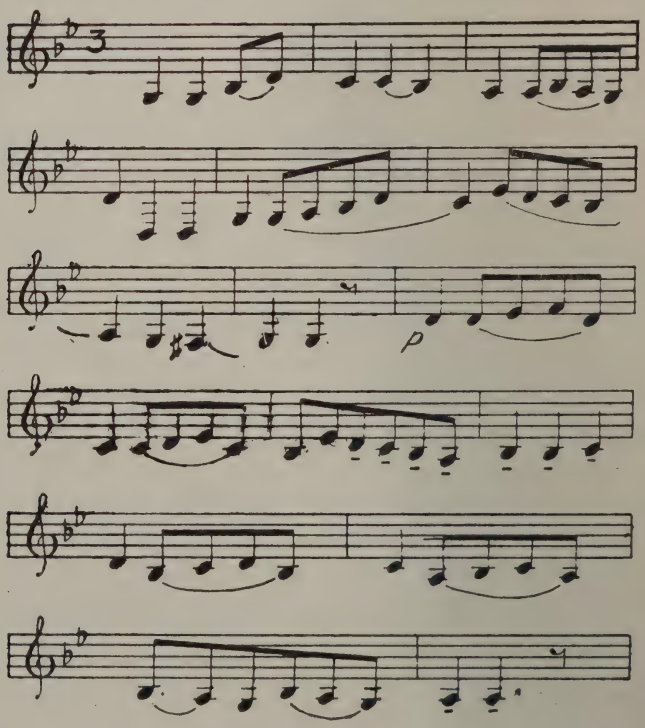
In the *second act* there is a beautiful solo for Goewin, in which the soaring arpeggio figures in the orchestra define the yearning of her soul for the return of her maiden innocence. The scene between Gwydion, Goewin, Math and Gwion also has some fine emotional moments. Math's anger and sorrow over Gwydion's defection are also well portrayed. The potion-drinking scene is dramatically and convincingly handled, and is followed by some "wild fowl" music (quoted later in discussing the opera *Dylan*) and by the voice of the Sea-King heard softly in the distance above a pedal bass note only. The appearance of the demons to Gwydion after Elan has left him is associated with some of the most remarkable and powerful music of the opera. This has a *macabre*-like gruesomeness, and finds its closest analogy in Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries." The theme representative of the terrors of the underworld naturally comes in for some extensive working

here, and a magnificent scene is built up, dramatic, fierce and wild. A little later, the noble, dignified "Nodeus" theme returns in effective contrast, till it is ousted by the furious music that accompanies the appearance of the wolves on the scene, and the end of the act is one of blood-curdling horror.

The *third and last act* preserves a high level almost throughout, and the interest is more uniformly maintained than it is in any of the preceding portions of the opera. It contains passages of supreme aesthetic beauty and pictures of the most vivid and graphic power. The barbaric nature of the scene between Gwion and Goewin is excellently conceived, and here the theme illustrative of the elemental nature of the work becomes prominent. Math's words of pity for the ill-fated maiden are accompanied by a lyrical passage of much beauty, whilst his reply to Gwion, commencing "There is a singing in my soul," is combined with an exquisite broad-phrase melody from the orchestra, representative of the underlying tenderness in Math's nature, which forms a graphic contrast to the stern music allotted to Gwion. All through this scene, indeed, the psychological interest of the drama is magnificently sustained in the music. The recalling of Gwydion and Govannion to human shape has a supreme dramatic intensity that it would be hard to forget.

The second scene of the act opens to the sound of great sea-music, which, in its beautiful atmospheric suggestiveness, has the same effect on the senses as certain fine pages in the sea romances of

Joseph Conrad have. It is followed by an exquisite solo for Elan. Here the harmonisation is free but of extreme delicacy. The passage in which she sings of the fairness of her *spirit of the sea* is one of unsurpassable beauty, pregnant with the purest and deepest emotion. The testing of Elan is also dramatically powerful and convincing. With the death of Math we have a noble funeral march, the theme of which is borrowed from an old Welsh song, and is as follows :—



The opera closes with strenuous passages indicative of the elemental nature of the subject, whilst the sinister theme always associated with the cauldron booms out its portentous warning of further strife to come.

*Dylan* deals with further developments of the story twenty years later. Here is represented the conflict between Earth and Sea and the struggle of the two for supremacy. The unfortunate Elan has become a guest at the castle of Gwyddno, King of Ceredigion, a tributary of Gwydion. She is unaware of the adoption of her son, Dylan, by Gwydion, and believes that he has been slain by him and Govannion at the time of the death of Math. When, therefore, in the first scene of the first act, Dylan himself appears before her as a minstrel, she fails to recognise him, and he leaves her to wander away to the sea, irresistibly drawn thither by the call of the blood. Then Govannion, who, together with his hated brother, Gwydion, is encamped with an army near Gwyddno's castle, enters and meets Elan after a long separation and speaks a few mocking words to her regarding her chastity, and then departs to follow Dylan and revenge upon him Elan's shame. As soon as he has gone, Gwydion arrives and informs Elan that the minstrel with whom she has recently been conversing is her own son. She is thrown into a state of wild agitation, but tells Gwydion that he will soon return, for Govannion has followed him. On learning this fact, Gwydion begins to fear the worst.

The *second scene* of the act takes us to the sea-shore, whither Dylan has wandered. Govannion overtakes him here, and, after listening unobserved to his address to the God of the Seas, he drives his spear between the minstrel's shoulders. The dying Dylan calls upon the sea-fowl to bear the tidings of his death to the ear of the Sea-King, and away they fly with their sorrowful burden.

In the *second act*, we see the Sea-King seated, in gloomy dejection, in his watery kingdom. As he sits there, the sound of the wild-fowl chorus is heard off, as these messengers of evil approach nearer and nearer. This introduction of the wild-fowl, as a chorus, was doubtlessly suggested by Aristophanes' comedy of *The Birds*, for it finds no place in the Cymric legends. The woeful tidings of Dylan's tragic death are communicated by them to his despondent father, who instantly rouses himself to action, calling upon his armies of wind and wave to accoutre him.

The first scene of the *third act* introduces us to a room in the sea-tower of Seithenin, the lord and guard of the dykes and sluices of the kingdom where Gwyddno is king. Here Govannion has taken refuge, and here he and Seithenin sit carousing. From outside, the voices of the chorus, attendant on the Sea-King, are heard approaching, and Govannion is moody and downcast. Finally, he quits the room, leaving Seithenin behind him in drunken slumber.

The *second scene* takes us to a sea-dyke whither Govannion has wandered. He stands watching

the battle of the elements. To the fury of the winds and waves, the lightning adds its fierce flashes, whilst the thunder increases the clamour with its threatening rumblings. The voice of the Sea-King from the distance reaches Govannion, and he is horror-stricken. Rushing down the embankment, he disappears, whilst the Sea-King appears on the embankment to spur on his attendant hosts of wind and wave to destructive action. Finally, a great piece of the embankment gives way.

The *last scene* reveals the battlements of Gwyddno's castle, and here Govannion comes begging for admission and for protection against the encroaching waves. The Sea-King, however, appears on the wall beside Gwyddno and renders him powerless to help his supplicant. The waves continue to advance until Govannion is finally engulfed by them at the foot of the castle walls, whilst the Sea-King looks down mockingly on him from above. Then that potentate surveys his work of destruction, and moralises upon its insignificance when considered as merely one of the cyclic happenings of the universe, doomed to be repeated time after time, whilst he also touches upon the idea of metempsychosis, a doctrine to be more fully exploited in the last opera of the triology, *Bronwen*.

A wild, fierce subject indeed! There is something in it that calls up memories of the great deeds that the Greek and Scandinavian mythologies have handed down to us; a grandeur of idea that is almost epic in conception. To define in music the great forces of nature thus at conflict was not an

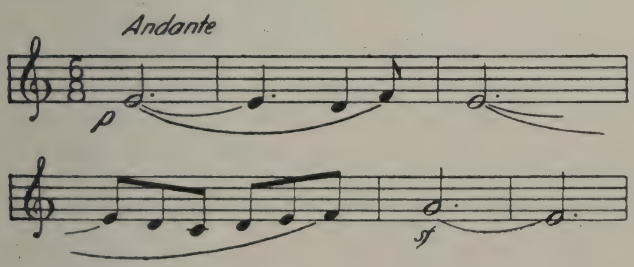
easy task; yet the composer's fine gift of imagination has enabled him to do what no other English composer could have done so successfully, and *Dylan* is, in many respects, even superior to *The Children of Don.*

The character of Gwyddno is not particularly well limned in the music, but then, after all, he is only a sketch in the book. Gwydion, too, plays quite a minor part here, but his character is as lucidly defined as in *The Children of Don.* The music of Elan in *Dylan,* though of small extent, is tender and womanly, as it was in the preceding opera, and we are again moved by the spell of her gentleness and of her lovableness. The music that is woven around the figure of Dylan, too, shows a fine power of visualisation in the composer; it is mystic, and seems to suggest the coming tragedy, whilst the superhuman nature of this being who gives the title to the drama is subtly delineated. Govannion, as defined in the music, continues to be even more bewildering than he was in the music that depicted the earlier adventures of his life, though, apart from its psychological import, it still remains extremely interesting. The character of the wine-bibbing Seithenin, though, stands out clear and unblurred. He is just a careless, roystering and rather coarse individual, and the music attaching to him makes a fine contrast to that of the other individuals with whom he is associated. It is in the music of the Sea-King, however, that the supreme merit of *Dylan* lies. He dominates the whole situation, as he should do. Holbrooke

attempted to represent in music a character of somewhat similar ruggedness in one of his early poems, *The Viking*, but the music illustrative of the corsair's nature and actions is tame beside that which depicts the Sea-King, and the composer has given us, here, a piece of vivid psychology. As Holbrooke realises his kingly hero, he is a being, rough and uncouth and of extreme virility; his power lies in his determination and in his brute force, and nothing can resist the strength of his arm or the might of his resolve. The seas obey him and the earth shakes beneath his tread; the dread of his presence is as great as was that of Jove the Thunderer.

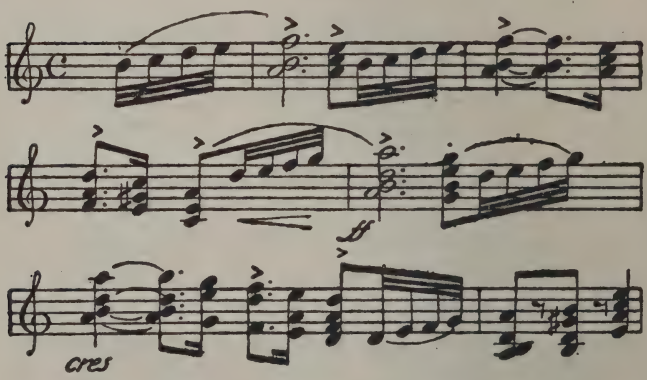
Many of the themes that were found in *The Children of Don* are utilised in *Dylan*, either in the same or a slightly changed form, so that the unity of the cycle is preserved.

Amongst the new leading themes, one of the most important is that which is associated with the death of Dylan, and also, generally, with "the sea"—

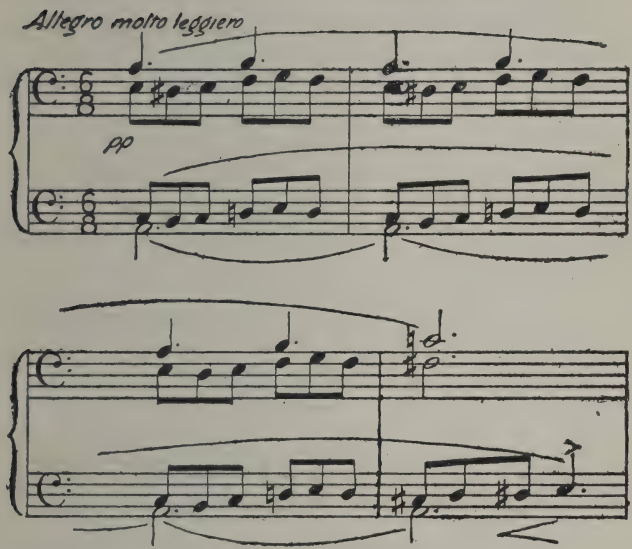


The character of Seithenin is represented by the following bold theme—

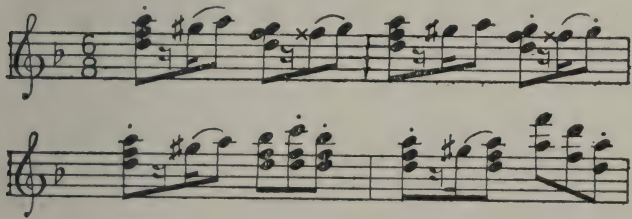
The "Sea-King" subject is characteristically forceful and rugged—




Besides these themes, appertaining to the leading characters of the drama, we have a few others of great importance. Thus, the "wave" motif, next quoted, is a variant of a "wave" *motif* that appeared in *The Children of Don*—




and it is made to play one of the chief parts in the development of the story; whilst the weird "wild-fowl" theme, which had also previously made its appearance in *The Children of Don*—



is even more important, and is to be found, either in its original form or in some of its metamor-

phoses, constantly throughout the score. This music alone would make the reputation of Holbrooke secure.

These are the chief themes of the opera, and their plastic nature is evidenced by the number of changes that they are made to undergo in the drama, and by the fine dramatic scenes that are worked up out of the material that they supply.

The drama is written for three baritones (Dylan, Seithenin and Gwydion), two bassos (Govannion and the Sea-King), one tenor (Gwyddno), one contralto (Elan), and a chorus of sea-folk, waves and wild-fowl. The opera opens with a short overture. There is, however, a very elaborate "Prelude," for Grand Orchestra, on the Dylan themes for the concert room.

The full form of the "Govannion" theme p. 253 (No. 2) is first encountered in *Dylan,* when that character recalls the time when he and Gwydion were beneath Math's enchantment—

> "Since through the wasted lands we ran
> In flesh of wolves beneath Math's ban"

As he continues his recital, modified forms of this theme are constantly heard in the lower part of the accompanying harmony. Shortly afterwards, Dylan appears upon the scene, and, with his entrance, we begin to get a grip of things, and to enter upon some of the most sensitively beautiful music of the opera.

In the *second scene,* we find ourself at night upon the sea-shore, and the *motif* descriptive of the gently

lapping waves p. 267 (No. 1) is softly heard in the orchestra. The effect of this—so rich in atmospheric suggestion—is entrancingly lovely, and, nowhere in this opera are the fine musical gifts of the composer better evidenced than in the greater part of this scene. Few operas can show the same picturesque vividness, and this sea-music leaves behind it a memory that is ineffaceable. Among these desolate surroundings, Dylan comes wandering, singing in speech-like recitative of the wonders of the sea, during which the lulling murmur of the rise and fall of its waters continues to be heard in the orchestra. In the ensuing scene for Dylan and Govannion, the latter personage becomes rather unconvincing and tedious, the whole interest here centring in the leading character.

The music in which the dying Dylan asks who has struck him down is most exquisitely conceived, the monotonous figure in the orchestra being graphically suggestive of his ebbing strength.

Later, when Govannion describes the seduction of his sister by the Sea-King, he does so in music whose ideas are largely borrowed from the same source.

As the soul of Dylan drifts out into the Silence, the themes of p. 265 and p. 254 (No. 1) again spring up in the orchestra. Away fly the sea-fowl to bear the tidings of the cruel murder to the Sea-King's ears, whilst the "death" theme is again thundered out as if to betoken the portentous import of the demise of such a hero, the new harmonies with which it is here surrounded making it peculiarly

poignant in its expression. It is heard, too, in the following chorus for sea-fowl, in conjunction with some of the other subjects. This is a magnificent piece of writing that has few parallels in music. It is full of weird, breathless emotion, and, towards the end, becomes furious in its tones of vociferous and frenzied horror. Finally, the "wave" *motif* is introduced to denote the passage of the excited, clamorous birds across the ocean, and, with a few impressive chords, this act is brought to a close.

The second act is preceded by a picturesquely-written introduction. When, later, the bereaved Sea-King is seen seated on his throne of rough stone, the music is sombre and gloomy, though interrupted at times by suggestions of the approach of the wild-fowl, and the effect is like that of a calm that often precedes a thunderstorm. As Lyd dreams of his love for Elan, we hear in the instrumental part a modified form of the same beautiful theme that the thought of Elan had previously conjured up to Govannion in the first act. During this part of the music, the upper part of the scene becomes more lurid, and then, across the stormy light pass the wild-fowl, as though flying low across the surface of the sea. Their flight is accompanied by an instrumental passage built up entirely out of the finely-conceived theme of p. 267 (No. 2). It is followed, a little later, by a short chorus for the sea-folk, who demand where Dylan is. The reply is given by the wild-fowl—

"Dead is Dylan, dead is Dylan!"

and the emotion is one of overwhelming sorrow, the manner in which the word "Dead!" is reiterated being particularly terrible in its despairing pathos.

The chorus is in eight parts, and is a fine piece of contrapuntal construction, remarkable not only for its cleverness, but for the beauty and dramatic quality of its thematic material. During the course of it, the "Dylan" theme of p. 254 (No. 1) constantly thrusts itself forward with fine suggestive effect. It becomes particularly prominent during the *adagio solenne,* when the divided sopranos and contraltos address the Sea-King alone. It is also heard a little later, in both the orchestral and voice parts, when the tenors and basses proceed to describe their journey to the Sea-King's realm, without the support of either soprano or contralto voices. Towards the end, the Wild Fowl *motif* of p. 267 (No. 2) becomes gradually more and more assertive in the orchestra, whilst the vocal writing is sometimes divided into ten parts.

The great Sea-King song, in which the monarch rouses himself from meditation to vengeful action, at the end of Act 2, is another powerful number.

The *first scene of the third act* shows us a room in Seithenin's tower, whither Govannion has fled. Both men are seated at a table with drinking vessels, but, whereas Seithenin finds pleasure in jovial carousals, Govannion is full of gloomy fears. The melody sung by Seithenin after the rising of the curtain is based upon the theme of p. 266 (No. 1), and is full of careless jollity. But Govannion only replies in gloomy accents. Their converse is

interrupted by the distant voices of the chorus chanting that Dylan is dead. A fine effect! Then Seithenin falls asleep, and Govannion goes out.

Later, in this great act, Govannion staggers to the foot of the walls of Gwyddno's castle, whilst the Sea-King and Gwyddno appear above side by side. Govannion, in desperation, begs that the gates may be opened to him, but the Sea-King is adamant, whilst the ruthless theme of p. 266 (No. 2) urges itself upon the notice to emphasise the relentlessness of his words. Later, a fine, bold theme in the orchestra further illustrates the unswerving nature of his vengeance. Govannion then appeals to Gwyddno, and the music is full of intense dramatic power. Finally, Govannion is swallowed up by the waves, and, in the music descriptive of this, the reappearance of a modified version of the theme of p. 254 (No. 1) reminds us that Dylan has been avenged. Throughout the whole of this act, the music has a dramatic force that is truly wonderful, and, at moments, attains a real epic grandeur of conception.

As it will be seen, the feminine interest in this portion of the trilogy is small. Only Elan's music and the music that relates to her history approach to any form of tenderness. The remainder is chiefly concerned with rough, primitive action. This may possibly prove a deterrent to it becoming a "popular" work for the stage, but it is to be hoped that these fears may not be realised. The drama has a grandeur all its own in the magical way in which the mystery of the sea and of its ruler is

built up. It is a masculine work—a work depicting the characteristics of a race of beings for whom the word "civilisation" has no meaning. Barbarous, rugged and uncouth, it is; but it is also a conception of great intellectual strength and of striking originality. Moreover, it is a work of grand and noble nature, such as could only have proceeded from a brain of vivid imaginative powers and—to say the last word—of genius.

The third part of this trilogy, "Bronwen," which is now nearly complete,* deals with the later happenings to the famous cauldron, and the theory of metempsychosis, as previously mentioned, has to be accepted to explain the closeness of its connection with the earlier parts of the drama. None of the original characters of *The Children of Don* and *Dylan* are to be found in *Bronwen,* but the personages introduced are reincarnations of the previous characters. The main incidents are taken from *The Mabinogion—Brangwyn, the daughter of Lyr,* and the interest centres round the marriage of Bronwen (Elan), the sister of Bran (Math), King of Britain, to Matholoc (a new character), King of Ireland. Evnissyen (Govannion), the half-brother of Bran, loves Bronwen, however, whilst she, in turn, loves Caradoc (Gwydion), who receives her attentions coldly. Evnissyen is angry at Matholoc's application for Bronwen's hand, whilst he also becomes embroiled with Caradoc. Bronwen, however, decides to marry Matholoc, and Bran promises to make him a gift of the cauldron of

* Since completed.

Anwyn. To this suggestion, Evnissyen, Caradoc and Taliessin (Gwion), a bard, are hostilely averse. They are over-ruled by Bran, however, and the cauldron becomes the property of the married pair, who then depart for Ireland. Of this marriage, Gwern (Dylan) is born. Certain of the kings of Ireland, and especially Cormac (Arawn), eventually consider their country insulted by this match of Matholoc's, and Bronwen, at length, decides to leave the kingdom, and also her son behind her, in order to secure the safety of those whom she loves the dearest. This comes to the ears of Bran, and the latter part of the drama is given up to the complications that ensue, and, here, the maleficent influence of the cauldron upon those who come most in contact with it is again exemplified.

A few numbers from the opera have already been published, the most important of which is the fine Prelude. This is based upon the lines of Taliessen's "Dawn Song"—

"The mists are melting and the distant day
Dances with feet of flame on the pale hills.
The streams run molten to the cold blue bay,
And the deep forest weeps and fills
Its path with music of dissolving dew.

. . . . . .

O blessed soil, the brazen clouds are lifting from your sleep!
Like heavy memories. And soon on high
Shall they take their radiance, and the deep
Eternal meadow flame with glories afresh.
So rise, all shadows, from these isles, and build
Full bastioned splendours whence distilled—
Rains of remembrance fall upon all flesh."

The Prelude has three main subjects, the first of which is marshalled in by a few introductory bars based upon a "call"-like *motif*. This first theme is an expressive *andante* in common time, softly played and exquisitely harmonised. It is followed by a *molto agitato, allegro e fuoco,* consisting of material built up out of the "wave" *motif* of the preceding operas and out of episodic matter, in which three descending chromatic notes figure largely. This then leads into the second main subject, a lyrical *larghetto* of much melodic appeal. After a couple more pages of an episodical character, we then reach the dignified and impressive third subject (a Welsh folk-tune), which has already been quoted as having been utilised in the incidental music to *Pontorewyn*. The Prelude concludes with a brisk passage in which the three descending chromatic note *motif* is brought into much prominence. The whole work is very noble in feeling.

Bronwen's "Cradle-Song," which the mother sings to her little son Gwern, is another little gem of musical fancy taken from the same opera.

With such achievements as *The Children of Don* and *Dylan* before us, who is there so bold as to say that England is an unmusical country and that her people are an unimaginative race. So when Germany, France, Italy, Russia or Finland send to us the stars from out their musical firmaments, let us ask ourselves the question if our own firmaments are not as bright; and, if we find that we have artists fit to honour, let us give honour where

honour is due. But, above all, let us be honest, and not drift on tides of fashion; and when genius is amongst us, let us not arrest its growth by neglecting to recognise it, but let us rather show our pride in it by encouraging it, to the best of our power, to ripen and develop.

# CHAPTER XI

## OTHER WORKS

Quintet No. 2 Op. 27 (b)—"Fate."
Sextet No. 3 Op. 43—"Henry Vaughan."
String Quartet No. 3 (Op. 68)—"The Pickwick Club."
Suite for String Quartet on Folk Songs No. 1 (Op. 71).
Suite for String Quartet on Folk Songs No. 2 (Op. 72).
Suite for String Quartet or Folk Songs No. 3 (Op. 74).
Serenade for Wind Instruments, Op. 63.
Romantic Sonata for Violin and Piano (Op. 59).
Opera Ballet—"The Magician" (Op. 65).
Ten Pianoforte Studies (Op. 58).
Suite of Violin or Clarinet Pieces (Op. 55).

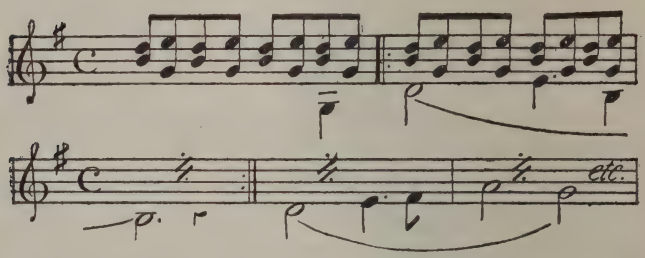
In addition to the works that have already been discussed, there are a few others which have not, as yet, been published, and, of these, a short account should be given.

The list includes some important chamber-works and an Opera Ballet of much charm, whilst there are also many interesting compositions of smaller proportions.

*Quintet No. 1 (Op. 27b).*

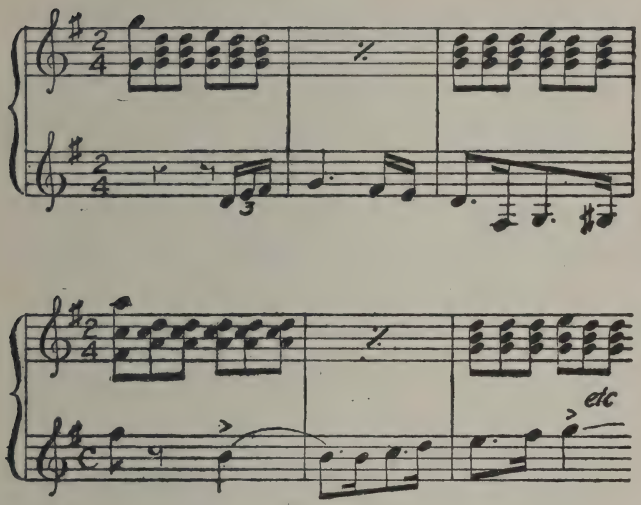
This *Quintet in G,* for two violins, viola, violoncello, and A clarinet, was originally written for two violins, viola, violoncello, and horn, in 1901, but was remodelled in 1910. It is in two parts, and opens *maestoso moderato.*

The beautiful first subject of the work is announced by the clarinet *molto allegro* below a tremulous movement for the violins—




The second subject appears *marcia moderato allegro.* The working out portion is long and elaborate, and contains some interesting episodical matter. In the recapitulation the first subject reappears on the clarinet in a slightly varied and very effective form, whilst the second subject is apportioned between the different instruments. The music throughout is excellently conceived.

The last movement of the work starts off *molto vivace* with a reiterated figure for the violins and viola, below which, a couple of bars later, the 'cello announces the first subject—




The second subject is given to the muted viola, accompanied by the muted violins, and is in the key of D major. This is then repeated by the clarinet and combined with effective counterpoints. Developments of this and of the accompanying counterpoints ensue, and the movement then proceeds in logical fashion towards a *Coda,* which is built up out of previous material. The work generally is attractive in thematic material and interesting in facture.

### *Sextet No. 3 Op. 43 "Henry Vaughan."*

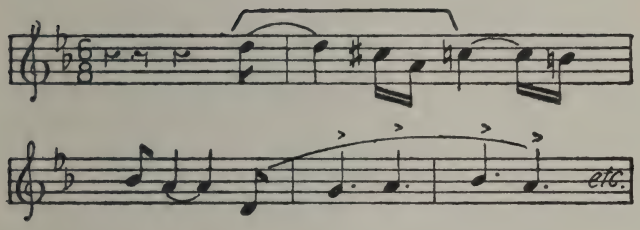
The "*Henry Vaughan*" *Sextet in D major,* for two violins, two violas, and two violoncellos, was partly written in 1898, and was revised in 1906. It is pastoral in character, and derives much of its impulse from certain lines of the poet to whom it owes its title, though it is the composer's wish that it should be regarded as absolute music. Still, it is interesting to be acquainted with the verbal thoughts that underlie the spirit of the work, and the following lines from "Daphnis" help one much to a fuller enjoyment of the first movement—

"So thrives afflicted truth and so the light
When put out gains a value from the night.
How glad are we, when but one twinkling star
Peeps betwixt clouds more black than is our tar:—

. . . . . .

Come, shepherds, then, and with your greenest bays
Refresh his dust who loved your learned lays.
Bring here the florid glories of the Spring."

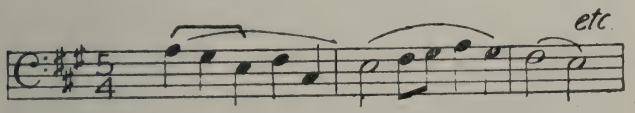
The first movement of this Sextet opens with a short introduction *Adagio,* during which the second 'cello is tuned down to B flat for the sake of an octave pedal. The theme is given to the first violin, and accompanied, first, by the first viola, and, later, by all the instruments. It is as follows:—




The notes enclosed within the bracket are of particular importance, as they form a sort of motto, and recur, in various forms, constantly during the work.

The first subject of the first movement, which is in D major in five-four time, proceeds from the first violin, and is doubled, part of the way, by the second violin, and the remainder of the way by the first viola. The second 'cello is now tuned in the ordinary manner, and the "motto" notes reappear in the new melody.

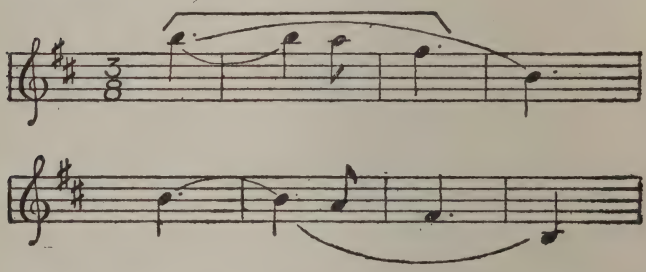
The beautiful second subject is announced *lento poco* by the first 'cello in the key of A major—




An explanation of the significance of the second movement may be sought in certain other lines from "Daphnis."

"Here Daphnis sleeps, and while the great watch goes
Of loud and restless time takes his repose,
Fame is but noise: all learning's but a thought:
Nature knocks both, and wit still keeps ado;
But Death brings knowledge and assurance too."

This movement consists of two subjects, of which the first is in the key of B minor in three-eight time *andantino molto*—



The "motto" *motif*, as it may be observed, is again responsible for generating the first three notes of the melody, and the music advances in this peaceful manner, with the lightest of scoring, until the second subject appears in five-four rhythm *poco allegro* in the key of E major.

The third and last movement is a *rondo, allegro non troppo* in D major, to which the following lines supply a cue—

"Cast in your garlands! strew on the flowers
Which May, with smiles, or April feeds with showers,
Let this day's rites as steadfast as the sun
Keep pace with time and through all ages run."

The "rondo" subject, which is preceded by a few introductory bars, is bright and pleasing, whilst the second subject is in the key of A major, and is announced by the first violin. It is then given out by the first 'cello, and followed by some episodical matter. The whole of the movement up to this point is then repeated, after which the first 'cello proceeds to formulate a fugal subject, based upon that of the "rondo" subject.

Though this Sextet has no deep emotional moods, it is gracious and charming throughout. There is an organic feeling about it that some of Holbrooke's chamber-music lacks, and for this, the nature of its derivative poem is largely responsible. The last movement is a little loose in places, but taken altogether, it ranks quite high among the chamber-works.

**String Quartet No. 3 (Op. 68)—"The Pickwick Club." (A Humoresque).*

This is one of the most important, as it is also the most elaborate, of the chamber-works, and is written around certain of the characters and incidents of Dickens' novel. Many of the critics have professed to find it much too intricate and much too modern in its spirit to be a faithful reflection of the simple humour of the book. That, perhaps, is, after all, a matter of temperament! At all events, as a form of argument, it carries little conviction. If all music was bound to conform to a

* This is now published by J. & W. Chester.

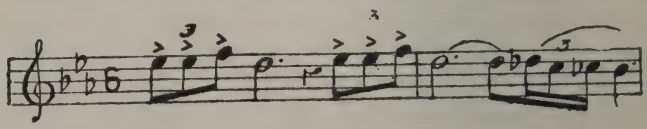
style prevalent in the period of the subject generating it, art would be strangely cramped. What kind of a musical setting should we have for the *Electra* of Sophocles, for *Tristan* or for *Boris Godounof*, for instance?

Holbrooke, in his "Pickwick" Quartet, has suggested an earlier age than our own century by the introduction of some old and well-known English songs, whose origin, however, lies far behind the Pickwickian period, but, technically, it adheres to the harmonic and rhythmic complexities of present-day art. The main thing about the work, nevertheless, so far as it concerns most people, is that it is of very real fascination, and has much delightful humour.

The Quartet is not written in classic form, but consists of a series of episodes. It is divided into two parts, of which the first deals with the following subjects:—

"Pickwick."
"A Field Day."
"Snodgrass and Winkle."
"Joe, the fat boy."
"The amorous Tupman."
"The Picnic."
"The Card Party."

The "Pickwick" theme introduces the work, and suggests that character's portliness and dignity—

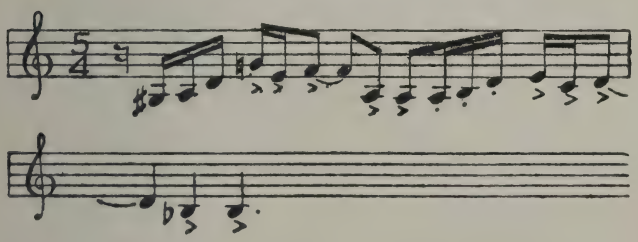


The "Field Day" section is in five-four time and opens with some passages from the lower strings borrowed from the whole tone scale, and the music throughout is full of life. During the course of it, we obtain a hint of the personalities of Mr. Snodgrass and Mr. Winkle on the violins.

The "Fat Boy" and his somnolence are suggested by a slow, heavy, chromatic passage for viola and 'cello below a *pizzicato* movement for the upper strings, and the effect is very humorous.

In the episode dealing with the amorous Mr. Tupman, we have references to the "Pickwick" theme, whilst, later, the air of "The Banks of Allan Water" is heard on the first violin with an elaborate accompaniment.

The "Picnic" section is full of rollicking jollity, and is based mainly upon a theme of a particularly happy-go-lucky character—



During the course of this episode, we obtain a glimpse of the charm of Miss Rachel in a few bars of waltz measure. Many incidents of the picnic, too, are amusingly suggested as the music proceeds on its jovial career.

The "Card Party," which takes place, later, at Mr. Wardle's house, is represented by the quiet, homely air of "The Ivy Green," simply arranged.

The movement closes with a repetition of the "Pickwick" theme to signify the leading personage around which all the other characters revolve.

The second part deals with—

"The romantic side of Mr. Pickwick."
"Sam Weller's character."
"Mr. Jingle's (alias Trotter's) character."
"Mr. Winkle and Mr. Tupman with the guns."
"Mr. Pickwick and Mrs. Bardell."
"The tortuous wiles of Mrs. Bardell."

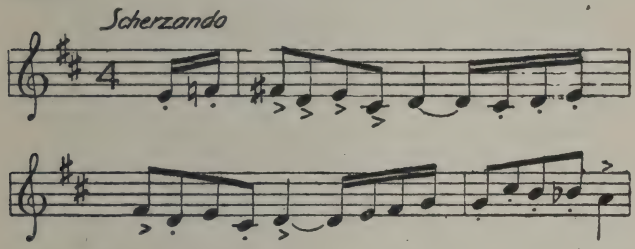
This movement is one of much intricacy. In the episode treating of the romantic side of Mr. Pickwick, we have the first theme interestingly and cleverly developed.

The "Sam Weller" theme is introduced by all the strings in unison, and is the same perky theme that was first heard in the "Picnic" section (p. 285).

The character of Mr. Jingle (alias Trotter) is humorously portrayed by the appearance of the hymn "There is a happy land."

The next portion of the work, "The first of September" is a *presto* of a very delightful and complex character. It is full of verve, and a fine picture of one of those careless days that we associate with the age in which our land was known as "Merrie England." At the end of the episode, the fine old song "Ye Gentlemen of England" appears with fine effect.

Mrs. Bardell is suggested by a skittish air on the viola—




At the close of this, we hear the melody of "We won't go home till morning" on the 'cellos to signify the celebrations of the shooting party at the end of their day's sport. This works up to a fine pitch of excitement till we reach the reappearance of the Pickwick theme *allegro maestoso* as an intimation that his dignity is still unimpaired. The melody of "Sally in our Alley" is also heard just before the work terminates.

The Quartet throughout is of most picturesque character, and the contrapuntal texture, though elaborate, is so finely woven that each thread of melody fits in with the others without any sense of straining. It is one of Holbrooke's most remarkable achievements, and is obviously a *virtuoso* quartet.

*Song and Dance Suites for String Quartet (Op. 71, Op. 72 and Op. 74).**

The first Suite is divided into four parts, namely, (1) *A Soldier's Song*, (2) *English*

* The first two of these are now published.

*Songs* (*Come Lasses and Lads, Simon the Cellarer,* and *We All Love a Pretty Girl*), (3) *Irish Songs* (*The Last Rose of Summer* and *Mavourneen Deelish*), and (4) *Reels* (*The Devil among the Tailors, Clyde Side Lassies, Gillie Callum, The Fife Hunt, Green grow the Rushes O, Johnny's made a Wedding O't, The Highlandman Kissed His Mother, O'er Boggie with My Love,* and a *Coda*).

The second Suite introduces (1) *Strathspeys (Scotch), "Keep the Country, Bonnie Lassie," "Tullochgorum"* and *"Cameron's Got His Wife,"* (2) *Song of the Bottle (Welsh),* (3) *"All thro' the Night" (Welsh), and* (4) *Irish Jigs—"Garryowen," "Irish Washerwoman," "Paddy O'Carroll," "The Tight Little Island," "Roaring Jelly," "Paddy Whack," "The Patriot," "Go to the Devil,"* and *"St. Patrick's Day."*

The third Suite is composed of *Auld Lang Syne, David of the White Road,* and *Some Ragtime.*

All the airs are splendidly arranged, and the work throughout is of a very charming character.

### *Serenade for Wind Instruments (Op. 63).*

This work is written for oboe (or oboe d'amore), B flat clarinet, corno di bassetto (or cor anglais), viola, 2 flugel horns (B flat soprano and B flat baritone), Saxophones (B flat soprano, E flat alto, B flat tenor, E flat baritone, and B flat bass), and harp, and is light and graceful in type. The main theme, which has a very appealing melodic attraction, is first heard on the clarinet and soprano saxo-

phone in conjunction, and the contrapuntal work throughout is very easy and spontaneous. The composer intends adding to this Serenade a brighter movement by way of contrast. The combination of instruments has promise of much beauty in performance.

### *Violin Sonata.*

The *Romantic Sonata* (or Concerto) (*Op.* 59), for violin and piano, is particularly distinguished for the lyrically melodious nature of its themes. It is in three movements, of which the first is a *vivace* in F major. In this, there is a short introduction for the piano alone, and then the string instrument gives out the first subject, which is of a syncopated character. After a short bridge-passage, the second subject is announced by the violin in the key of the dominant of the movement. This beautiful air is accompanied by flowing semi-quaver passages, and is then repeated with much dignity by the piano. The movement then takes a regular course, with the first subject reappearing *ff* with richly emotional effect from the piano, and being then repeated by the violin. The second subject reappears in the key of F major.

The second movement, *adagio non troppo*, opens very peacefully. It then presses forward by way of an *accelerando* and *crescendo* to a *poco allegretto* movement in which there is much effective modulation, and in which the emotional feeling is rather more intense. The return of the first subject is accompanied by a greater stir in the piano part.

The third movement has an introduction containing a few bars, given out *maestoso,* followed by a *vivace giocoso* passage. The first subject, which is lively and exhilarating, is first heard as a solo from the violin with an accompaniment of shimmering chords from the piano. The second subject appears on the violin *poco meno mosso* in the key of C major with a simple accompaniment from the piano.

Both in technique and in poetic feeling, this sonata is far in advance of the earlier violin sonata.

### *Ballet Opera—"The Wizard" (Op. 65).*

This work was written for the Russian *danseuse* Mme. Pavlova, and arrangements were made for the first performance of it at the Century Opera House, New York, but, owing to a series of misfortunes, it was never produced. It belongs, like *Pierrette,* to the lighter side of the composer's genius, and is almost Mozartian in its simplicity.

The libretto is the work of the American poet, Douglas Mallock, and has many attractive and fanciful ideas. The action takes place in mediæval Middle Europe. A certain wizard has overthrown a King, and holds as captives within his enchanted garden the King's daughter Maria and the nobles of her late father's court. Any outsider who has the temerity to enter this garden is at once stricken dumb, whilst, to leave it again after once entering it, brings death.

The first to pay the penalty is Oscar, a friend of a certain Prince Arthur, who, with his retinue, has lost his way near the Wizard's domain. The Prince is also about to cross into the confines of this spell-bound region when he is warned not to do so by Maria, with whom he instantaneously falls in love, and is beloved in return. Meanwhile, Oscar has become a slave to the charms of Patricia, who is also under the spell of the Wizard.

The Prince returns to his father's court to urge him to make war on the Wizard, but is scornfully informed of the futility of such an effort. A good Magician, however, appears, and assures them of the possibility of success. He refuses the King's proffered military assistance to achieve his purpose, and he and the Prince set out unaided on their heroic adventure.

Meanwhile, tragic events are happening elsewhere. Oscar crosses the boundary line of the enchanted garden, followed by Patricia, and, as a consequence, both die to an accompaniment of fiendish laughter. Then Prince Arthur and his colleague the Magician appear. At sight of Maria within the garden, the Prince cannot resist rushing towards her, with the result that he is at once struck speechless. A contest between the Magician, as representative of the Power of Goodness, and the Wizard, as representative of the Powers of Evil, ensues, with the natural result that Goodness reigns triumphant. The spell of dumbness is removed from all the dwellers in the garden. The Prince and Maria pledge their love, and the spirits of

Oscar and Patricia soar upwards in blissful happiness.

The orchestra employed in this opera is a small one, consisting of strings, wood-wind (two of each), trumpets, trombone, tuba, drums and harp.

The work throughout is full of melody, and has, in many places, passages of much picturesque dramatic distinction. The charming ballet music, too, naturally forms a very prominent feature of the work. There is a delightful orchestral Prelude full of suggestive material, and the chorus work and the first ballet at the commencement of Act I. are both good. The Wizard's song, "A Wizard I," with its fluent phraseology, is also a notable number, although this is quite overshadowed by the beauty of Maria's song in which she tells how love alone can save her, which is one of the finest bits of inspiration in the opera. The ballet music of this act, generally, too, has much fascination.

In the second act, there is a stirring chorus for soldiers, followed by a very dainty female ballet (in which the chief theme of the preceding chorus reappears), and a processional dance of a tunefully graceful character. Prince Arthur's solo "Not Far From Here" is also a very appealing piece of writing, whilst in the Jester's song "When the Spirits of the Air," the ironic element is cleverly emphasised and maintained. A well-defined sense of mystery, too, attaches to the music surrounding the Magician and his song "There is Good and there is Evil" is a fine dramatic number. The

scene of the calling up of the spirit of Maria adds further distinction to the act.

The third act opens with a seductive dance in the moonlight for the ballet and Oscar. Patricia's languorous "dance of passion" which follows is one of the most beautiful dance measures of the work. Her "dance of terror" after Oscar's death is also full of wild tumult, whilst the whole of this part of the act is most dramatically conceived. In the Wizard's Evocation Scene, too, we get a glimpse of the Holbrooke of *The Children of Don*, whilst the Wizard's song "Goat of Mendes" is a very graphic piece of writing, and the Magician's solo "O Light of Life" has much exquisite feeling. The valse ballet and chorus that comes later is full of attraction, and, as the phantoms of Oscar and Patricia appear, we again hear the strains of the beautiful "dance of passion," and with the sounds of these in our ears, the work comes to a close.

This opera is a fresh departure for the composer, but he has adapted himself to his new surroundings with much ease.

## *Smaller Works.*

Among the lesser unpublished works are also a set of *Ten Pianoforte* Studies (Op. 58)—*Impressions of a Tour*—(1) *Bay of Naples*, (2) *Palermo*, (3) *Girgenti*, (4) *Empedocles*, (5) *Malta*, (6) *Syracuse*, (7) *The Adriatic*, (8) *Brindisi*, (9) *Corfu*, and

(10) *Marseilles,* and they are also framed so as to be of great use to the student, whilst a "Suite of Pieces" for violin (Op. 55)—"Nocturne," "L'Extase," "Serenade," "Elegie," "Melodie," "Eilean Shona," and "From Syracuse" (Scherzo)—can hardly fail to appeal to all those interested in the instrument.*

Besides these, there are many other works sketched and partly written that still await the composer's finishing touches.

* * * * * *

This completes the list of Holbrooke's compositions, and it must be acknowledged that it is a lengthy one, offering a convincing testimony both to the fertility of his invention and to his industry. A quotation from Plato's "Republic" is apposite at this point: "Does then," said I, "the discourse concerning music seem to be finished, for it hath terminated where it ought to terminate in the love of the beautiful." The knowledge of Holbrooke's complete work leaves behind it the same impression. It is on account of its many beauties that we love it. He has written in nearly every branch of his art, and gained distinction in all. Such works as *The Bells, Apollo and the Seaman, The Song of Gwyn ap Nudd,* many of the chamber-works, and the operas *The Children of Don* and *Dylan* have placed him in the ranks of the world's great masters, and there is no reason to doubt his ability to maintain that position.

* These piano or violin pieces are now published.

Naturally, his work has its moments of weakness, for no composer can always maintain a uniform level of lofty inspiration; but we judge it by the many gems of sterling value that blazon forth their lustre out of settings of somewhat lesser worth. The chief strength of the composer lies in his pictorial and dramatic sense, and his best music has been generated by external ideas. By reason of this quality, we naturally found him verging towards opera. As a delineator of the gruesome, uncanny and mysterious, he is the most pronounced spirit of his age, though his art is by no means limited within those bounds. He loves, however, to paint a scene of lurid strangeness or virile action rather than to depict a simple emotion, for then he can revel in his wonderful power of tonal colouring more fully. The quality of *tenderness*, for instance, is much less prominently present in his work than it is in that of most of the great composers. It is not that he lacks the power to portray it, for many beautiful passages from *The Children of Don, The Song of Gwyn ap Nudd, Annabel Lee, Coromanthe,* and some of the chamber-works would quickly spring up to prove the fallacy of such an assertion; it is rather that his mind does not respond so readily to the "melting mood."

His work generally is full of ingenious rhythmic material, which inclines rather to ruggedness than to suavity of phraseology, whilst, in his harmony, he has indulged freely in empirical methods, with a result that has greatly enriched his later art. The strong vitality, that is so marked a feature of his

music generally, brings it closest into line with the art of Moussorgsky than with that of any other of the modern writers. It is the very antithesis of the art of Debussy, though both composers seek musical colouring by means of old modes and scales. One feels with Holbrooke, however, a particularly active *masculine* temperament at work, whilst, with Debussy, it was a dreamy *feminine* temperament of which one was mostly conscious. Holbrooke, too, works from a palette composed of vivid, brilliant colours, whilst Debussy worked to obtain more delicate *chiaroscuro* effects in tints of neutral shades; yet both composers meet on the common ground of a rich poetical imagination.

Another thing to be noted in Holbrooke's music is the regard for form that it evidences. Many modern composers disregard form almost entirely, but Holbrooke, in most of his chamber-works, shows a notable reverence for it. Vandalism has no attraction for him when the new edifice to be erected on the old holds out no promise of improvement.

Throughout the whole of Holbrooke's music we have the feeling of mental and technical *growth*. It has never halted in its progress towards more comprehensive modes of expression, and his Gargantuan Trilogy *The Cauldron of Anwyn* is the ripest fruit of his career up to date. The composer has, indeed, convincingly proved that he is no "drone among the bees, . . . no "swan worn out" in this supreme effort of his genius.

In many respects, Holbrooke is in advance of his

age and is not understood. As Ruskin once said, "The amount of pleasure that you can receive from any great work depends wholly on the quantity of attention and energy of mind you can bring to bear upon it." Unfortunately, the lack of the power of concentration is an essentially modern failing, and, consequently, the art ideals of composers are constantly being misconstrued. Those who know Holbrooke's work through and through, and who have become acclimatised to the peculiarities of his style, are forced to admit the *greatness* of much of it. Absolutely original work always takes a long time before reaching its legitimate place in art. Prejudices have to be eradicated, and a more considered valuation made of new ideals. It was a very true remark that Sophocles placed in the mouth of Ajax many hundred years ago—

> "Men of perverse opinion do not know
> The excellence of what is in their hands
> Till someone dash it from them."

The soarings of the musical imagination are often so far above us that we seem to need "the chamois' sinew and the eagle's wing" even to be able to approach it; but a day does come when, on pinions of greater comprehension, we soar a little, and then, with a more able understanding, often comes a much more thorough and general appreciation.

# LIST OF COMPOSITIONS

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*Op.* 1 *Anthems and Psalms:*

(1) Now thank we all our God (Broadbent, Leeds).
(2) Now when Jesus (Novello).
(3) Hear, O my people ( ,, ).
(4) Hear my voice, O God ( ,, ).

*Op.* 2 (a) *Twelve pieces for Pianoforte (for the Young):*

(1) For the Queen. (Marche Militaire No. 1.) (Leonard.)
(2) "Mignon" Valse. (Ascherberg.)
(3) A pleading child.
(4) A wilful child.
(5) Rustic dance
(6) Petit Mazurka.
(7) Danse Rustique.
} Five Bagatelles (Leonard).
(8) Study in G. (Trinity College.)
(9) Study in B flat. ,, ,,
(10) Study in F. ,, ,,
(11) Intermezzo. (Weekes.)

(b) *Intermezzo.* (Scored for Small Orchestra.) (Weekes)

*Op.* 3 *Six Violin and Piano Pieces (for the Young):*

(1) Melodie. (Vincent & Co.)
(2) On the Rhine. ( ,, ,, )
(3) Berceuse. ( ,, ,, )
(4) Polka peu dansante. ( ,, ,, )
(5) Valse mélancolique. ( ,, ,, )
(6) Scherzino. ( ,, ,, )

*Op.* 4 *Ten Pianoforte Pieces:*

(1) Valse Caprice. (Three Blind Mice.) (Augener.)
(2) Mazurka de Salon. (Leonard.)
(3) Valse Venetienne. ( ,, )
(4) Orientale. ( ,, )
(5) Scaramouche. ( ,, )
(6) Pantalon. ( ,, )
(7) Scherzo Cappricioso. ( ,, )
(8) Arlequinade. ( ,, )
(9) Carnival-Tarantelle. ( ,, )
(10) Valse Alsacienne. (Trinity College.)

*Op.* 5 *Two Poems for Violin and Piano:*

(1) Ballade. (Ascherberg.)
(2) Légende. ( ,, )

*Op.* 6

(a) *Sonata* for Violin and Piano. (Larway.)
(b) *Adagio and Rondo* for Clarinet and Piano. (Hawkes & Co.)

*Op.* 7 *Six Songs:*

(1) Fair Phyllis. (Boosey.)
(2) A wild rose. (Leonard.)
(3) A love symphony. ( ,, )
(4) I cannot tell. ( ,, )
(5) Golden daffodils. (Ascherberg.)
(6) There's a garden. ( ,, )

*Op.* 8 *Five pieces for Mandoline, Violin and Piano:*

(1) Bon Jour. (Rogers.)
(2) Entr'acte. ( ,, )
(3) Nocturne. ( ,, )
(4) Sérénade Arabienne. (Turner & Co.)
(5) Valse Characteristique. (Leonard.)

*Op.* 9 *Six Part-Songs, Madrigals and Glees:*

(1) Spring is cheery. (Bayley & Ferguson.)
(2) She's up and gone. (Novello.)
(3) Gentle Spring. ( ,, )
(4) The Wood-lark. (Cary & Co.)
(5) I will woo the rose. (Reid.)
(6) Thro' groves sequestered. (Novello.)

*Op.* 10 *Nine Pianoforte Pieces (for the Young):*

(1) A happy thought.
(2) Forgotten.
(3) Valse Gracieuse.
(4) A Columbine.
} (Hammond & Co.)

(5) Acrobats. (Rogers.)
(6) Matinée—Intermezzo. ( ,, )
(7) Valse Noble. ( ,, )
(8) Les Graces—Air de Ballet. ( ,, )
(9) Three Bagatelles: ( ,, )
(a) Scherzino.
(b) Petite Romance.
(c) Gnomes.

*Op.* 11. *Five Songs:*

(1) Summer Sweet. (Boosey.)
(2) Bonnie dear. (Enoch.)
(3) The tulip's wooing. (Stainer & Bell.)
(4) Sheila. (Enoch.)
(5) Honour bright. (Enoch.)

*Op.* 12 *Nine Violin and Piano Pieces (for the Young):*

(1) March in G. } Recreations. (Boosey.)
(2) Valse lente. }
(3) Moorish Dance. }
(4) Alla Napolitana. } Character Pieces. (Boosey.)
(5) Recollection. }
(6) Reconciliation. }
(7) Berceuse. (Novello.)
(8) Valse Sérénade. ( ,, )
(9) Caprice. ( ,, )

*Op.* 13 *Seven Songs:*

(1) Love foregone. (Leonard & Co.)
(2) We are violets. ( ,, )
(3) Good-morrow. ( ,, )

(4) Love's answer. (Ricordi & Co.)
(5) Where's mother? ( ,, ,, )
(6) The Sailor's bride. ( ,, ,, )
(7) I came at morn. (Larway.)

*Op* 14 *Five Bohemian Songs:*
(1) Unto my foe. (Boosey.)
(2) Liberty. ( ,, )
(3) Ere your beauty. ( ,, )
(4) Story of a drum. ( ,, )
(5) A free lance, also with orchestral accompaniment. (Boosey.)

*Op.* 15 *Five Songs:*
(1) In sunshine clad. (Leonard.)
(2) The sea hath its pearls. ( ,, )
(3) A voice. (Boosey.)
(4) Autumn. (Larway.)
(5) A winter night. ( ,, )

*Op.* 16 *Part Songs:*
(1) Sunrise. (Oliver Ditson & Co.)
(2) The Wanderers. ( ,, ,, ,, )

*Op.* 17. (a) *Seven Piano Pieces:*
(1) Clair de Lune. (Leonard.)
(2) Le Crépuscule. ( ,, )
(3) For the King. ( ,, )
(Marche Militaire No. 2.)
(4) Gavotte Élégante. ( ,, )
(5) Coquette. ( ,, )
(6) Barcarolle. ( ,, )

(7) A Valentine. (Cary & Co.)
(8) *Welsh Suite for Small Orchestra*—
"Pontorewyn." (Chester.)

(b) *Quartet (No. 1) for Strings.* (Chester.)

*Op.* 18 *Two Piano Suites:*

(a) *Kleine Suite.* (Breitkopf & Härtel.)

(a) Wunderlicher Einfall.
(b) Valse Grotesque.
(c) Scherzo Humorestique.
(d) Zuneigung.
(e) Verzweiflung.

(b) *Suite Moderne.* (Cary & Co.)

(a) Scherzo Humoresque.
(b) Valse Romanesque.
(c) By the Sea. Nocturne.
(d) L'Orgie—Bacchanale Fantasie.

*Op.* 19 *Fantasie Sonata for Violoncello and Piano.* (Chester.)

*Op.* 20. (a) *Sextet (No. 1) for Piano, Clarinet and Strings.* (Ricordi.)

"The Dances."

(a) Slavonic.
(b) Plantation.
(c) Landler.
(d) Tarantelle.

(b) Pianoforte Duet arrangement.

*Op.* 21. *Piano Quartet (No. 1) in G. minor.* (Chester.)

*Op.* 22 *Six Characteristic Songs.* (Boosey & Co.)

(1) Sympathy.
(2) Battle Song.
(3) Tag and Bobtail.
(4) Follow the gleam.
(5) Come to the west.
(6) Seawards.

*Op.* 23 *Six Pieces for Violin and Piano and 'Cello and Piano:*

(1) Sérénade Orientale. Also for military band. (Lengnick.)
(2) Humoresque. ( ,, )
(3) Souvenir. (Boosey.)
(4) Remembrance. (Leonard.)
(5) Sérénade. ( ,, )
(6) Souvenir de printemps. (Novello.)

*Op.* 24. *Six Lyrical Songs:*

(1) Tho' all the stars. (Stainer & Bell.)
(2) A little fairy. ( ,, ,, )
(3) Love and I. ( ,, ,, )
(4) To Dianeme. (Leonard.)
(5) They Love Indeed. ( ,, )
(6) Night and Day. (Reid.)

*Op.* 25 *Poem (No.* 1) *for Grand Orchestra, "The Raven":* (Chester.)
Also Piano Arrangement.

*Op.* 26 *Marche Triumphale* for Grand Orchestra. (Chester.)
Also Piano Arrangement in MS.

*Op.* 27 (a) *Quintet* (*No.* 1) *in D Minor.* (Chester.)
(b) *Quintet* (*No.* 2) *in G.* "*Fate.*" (MS.)
For Clarinet and Strings.

*Op.* 28. *Trio* (*No.* 1) *for Piano, Violin and Horn.* (Rudall Carte.)

*Op.* 29 *Six Dramatic Songs:* (Trench.) (Novello.)

(1) Come, let us make love deathless.
(2) I heard a soldier.
(3) My own sad love.
(4) O dreamy, gloomy, friendly trees.
(5) The Requital.
(6) Dark, dark the seas.

*Op.* 30. *Six Romantic Songs:* (Chester.)

(1) A lake and a fairy boat.
(2) To my wife.
(3) Come not.
(4) A farewell.
(5) To a cold lover.
(6) The Stars.

*Op.* 31 *Pianoforte Quartet* (*No.* 2) *in D minor*—"*Byron.*" (Chester.)

*Op.* 32 *Poem* (*No.* 2) *for Grand Orchestra*—"*The Viking.*" (Chester.)
Also Piano arrangement.

*Op.* 33 (a) *Sextet* (*No.* 2) for Piano and Wind Instruments—"Soul." (Chester.)
(b) *Quintet* (*No.* 2), "*Miniature Suite,*" for Wind Instruments. (Rudall, Carte.)

*Op.* 34 *Six Landscapes* for Voice and Piano. (Larway.)

(1) Along the path.
(2) The Shadows.
(3) High noon.
(4) Grey evening.
(5) Night.
(6) Stay, my love.

*Op.* 35 *Poem* (*No.* 3) *for Grand Orchestra*—"*Ulalume.*" (Breitkopf & Härtel.)
Also Piano arrangement.

*Op.* 36 (a) *Lyrical Drama*—"*Pierrot and Pierrette.*" (Chester.)
(b) *Ballet Suite* (*No.* 1)—"*Pierrot,*" for String and Full Orchestra. (Chester.)

*Op.* 37 *Variations for Orchestra:*
(a) Three blind mice. (Chester.)
Arranged for Piano Duet.
(b) "Girl I left behind me." (Chester.)
Also Piano arrangement.

*Op.* 38 *Suite for Orchestra* (*No.* 2)—"Dream*land*": (Weekes.)

(1) Ensemble.
(2) The Dance.
(3) Dreaming.
(4) Hilarité.
Also Piano arrangement.

*Op.* 39 *Poem (No.* 4) *for Orchestra and Chorus*—"*Byron.*" (Novello.)

Also Piano arrangement.

*Op.* 40 *Suite for Orchestra (No.* 3)—"*Les Hommages.*" (Chester.)

(1) Wagner.
(2) Grieg.
(3) Dvořák.
(4) Tschaikowsky.

Also Piano arrangement.

*Op.* 41 (a) *Marino Faliero.* (Scena for Baritone or Bass, with Orchestra.) (Chester.)

(b) *Annabel Lee.* (Ballad with Orchestra.) (Boosey.)

There are Pianoforte arrangements of both of these.

*Op.* 42 *Ten Rhapsodie Etudes for Piano.* (Larway.)

(1) Caprice Brillant.
(2) Poursuivant
(3) Énergique.
(4) La fantastique.
(5) Une nuit ténébreuse.
(6) Nocturne.
(7) Toccata.
(8) Fantoches.
(9) Valse fantasie.
(10) Novellette.

*Op.* 43 *String Sextet (No.* 3)—"*Henry Vaughan.*" (MS.)

*Op.* 44 *Quintet (No. 4)—"Diabolique"*—for Piano and Strings. (Chester.)

*Op.* 45 *Poem (No. 5) for Grand Orchestra and Chorus—"Queen Mab"* (Breitkopf & Härtel.)

Also Piano arrangement.

*Op.* 46 *Sextet (No. 4)—For Pianoforte and Strings—"In Memoriam."* (Chester.)

*Op.* 47 *Choral Songs:*

(1) Footsteps of Angels. (Novello.)
(2) To Zante. ( ,, )
(3) Jean Richepin's Song. (Bosworth.)
(4) In Fairyland. ( ,, )
(5) The Shirker. (Novello.)
(6) To Thee, Wales. (Stainer & Bell.)
(7) Captain Wattle. ( ,, ,, )
(8) Drink the Swizzy. ( ,, ,, )
(9) England's Battle Psalm. (Spottiswoode.)
(10) The Flower. (Chester.)

*Op.* 48 *Dramatic Choral Symphony for Orchestra and Chorus:* (Chester.)

(1) The haunted palace.
(2) Hymn to the Virgin.
(3) The City in the Sea.
(4) The valley Nis.

Also Piano arrangement.

*Op.* 49 *Opera—"The Snob."* (Unfinished)

*Op.* 50 *Poem (No. 6) for Grand Orchestra and Chorus—"The Bells."* (Breitkopf & Härtel.)

Also Piano arrangement.

*Op.* 51 *Dramatic Symphony for Grand Orchestra and Chorus, "Apollo and the Seaman."* (Novello.)

Also Piano arrangement.

*Op.* 52 *Poem-Concerto for Grand Orchestra and Piano. The Song of Gwyn-ap-Nudd."* (Chester.)

Also Piano arrangement.

*Op.* 53 *Music Drama "Dylan."* (Novello.)

*Op.* 54. *Five Songs.* (Cramer.)

(1) An Outsong.
(2) Killary.
(3) My Jean.
(4) Where be you going?
(5) Think not of it.

*Op.* 55 *Suite of "Mezzotints" for Clarinet or Violin and Piano.*

(1) Nocturne. (Novello.)
(2) L'Extace. (Ricordi.)
(3) Sérénade. ( ,, )
(4) Élegie. ( ,, )
(5) Melodie ("Eilean Shona"). (Cary.)
(6) From Syracuse (Scherzo). ( ,, )

*Op.* 56 *Music Drama—"The Children of Don."* (Novello.)

*Op.* 57 *Nocturne* for Piano, Oboe d'Amore and Viola—"*Fairyland.*" (Chester.)

*Op.* 58 *Ten Mezzotints* for the Piano. (Ricordi.)

*Op.* 59 (a) *String Quartet* (*No.* 2)—Belgium. (Chester.)
—Russia.
(b) *Romantic Sonata* for Piano and Violin. (MS.)
(c) *Four Futurist Dances for Piano.* (Chester.)
(a) Leprechaun Dance,
(b) Demon's Dance,
(c) Troglodyte Dance,
(d) Ensemble—Trollops Dance.

*Op.* 60 *Variations for Orchestra—"Auld Lang Syne."* (Chester.)
Also Piano arrangement.

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*Op.* 69 *Brass Band Works:* (Novello.)
(a) Girgenti,
(b) Butterfly of the Ballet,
(c) A hero's dream.

*Op.* 70

*Op.* 71. *Folk-Song Suite (No. 1)* for String Quartet. (Chester.)

*Op.* 72. *Folk-Song Suite (No. 2)* for String Quartet. (Chester.)

*Op.* 73

*Op.* 74 *Folk-Song Suite* (No. 3) for String Quartet. (MS.)

*Op.* 75

*Op.* 76 *Three Songs with String Quartet Accompaniment.* (Enoch.)

*Op.* 77 *The Orient* for Pianoforte. (Enoch.)

*Op.* 78 *Barrage* for Pianoforte. (Chester.)

*Op.* 79 *Valse*—Talsarnan—for Pianoforte. (Chester.)

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